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BEDOUIN TRIBES OF THE EUPHRATES.

RUINS OF PALACE OF EL HADDR.

(*Frontispiece, Vol. II.*

BEDOUIN TRIBES OF THE EUPHRATES.

BY

LADY ANNE BLUNT.

EDITED, WITH A PREFACE AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ARABS AND THEIR HORSES,

BY W. S. B.

83751

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WITH MAP AND SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR.

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BEDOUIN TRIBES

OF

THE EUPHRATES.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I must say the man in black clothes seemed to be as fine a man as ever lived in the world."—ARTEMAS WARD.

Difficulties arise with the Mutesherif—We are suspected of being spies—Kadderly Pasha—His excellent principles—Turkey the Land of Freedom—We engage a Bedouin from the Mehed to take us to Jedáan.

IN leaving Bagdad, as we had done, without paying a farewell visit to the Valy, we had committed a breach of etiquette, and in travelling without a buyuruldi a breach of the law, which might bring us into trouble with the Turkish authorities, whenever we came again under their jurisdiction. So we were rather anxious about the reception our old friend Huseyn might be disposed to give us, now that we were back at Deyr. We had learnt from the Mollah, in the course of our ride, some details of the little comedy, which had been played us there two months before, and were prepared for finding ourselves in the Pasha's bad books

The Mollah, it appeared, had been at Deyr at the time of our arrival, had seen us and known of our wish to visit his chief and, on one occasion, had actually been waiting in the courtyard of the Serai to speak to us, when Huseyn, happening to pass by, had sent him about his business, with the threat of extreme displeasure if he ventured to show himself there again during our stay. We knew then that our successful visit to Faris would not be a very agreeable piece of news to our old host; and the Serai, without the Consul to support us there, seemed suddenly changed in our eyes from the harbour of refuge it had been, to something not unlike a prison. We had counted throughout on his presence to set us right with the authorities; and now he was not there.

It was necessary however to put a bold face on it; so, when shortly after our arrival Huseyn appeared, Wilfrid in a cheerful voice appealed to him for congratulations on the success of our enterprise. We had seen everything and everybody in Mesopotamia; and everybody and everything had been delightful. Ferhán's sons, Smeyr and Faris, were the most agreeable people in the world, the desert had been a Garden of Eden, the ghazú stories all nonsense, and the country as safe for travellers as any part of the empire, or of Europe itself, for that matter. It was only to be regretted that his Excellency had not been able to make the journey with us, he would have enjoyed it so immensely.

Thus attacked, the Pasha could only repeat his usual exclamation, "Wah! wah! wah!" and appear delighted; though, to our guilty consciences, there seemed a curious expression not quite of pleasure in his eyes. "All was well that ended well. He was glad we had met with no accident; but the desert was a dangerous place, and the Bedouins were not always to be trusted. However, we had returned, which was the principal thing; and he would do his best to console us for our fatigues. Our old rooms unfortunately were occupied, or on the point of being occupied, by the new Valy of Bagdad, who was passing through Deyr; but we could lodge at the house of a Christian tradesman, one Z—— Effendi, where we should still be the Pasha's guests, and, he hoped, more comfortably than was possible in his own poor house. For himself he had had a miserable time of it, ever since we went away, perpetual work and perpetual solitude. He was beginning to pine for home and the society of his friends at Aleppo; and Deyr was bringing him to an early grave."

Poor man! we were ready enough to believe that the latter part at least of this little speech was sincere, for he looked, in the short time since we had seen him last, considerably aged. His hair was several shades whiter, and he had grown thin. So we expressed our sympathy heartily enough, and said as little as was necessary about our relations with the official world of Bagdad. It was only our

future plans that gave us anxiety, for it was easy to see that we should find no help from the Serai in what we were now bent on, a visit to the Anazeh. We resolved simply to say nothing at all about them.

Of Mr. S. the Pasha knew nothing, except that he had heard of him as being at Aleppo a month before, and expressed great surprise at our expecting to find him again at Deyr. Kadderly Pasha, the new Valy, would however arrive in a few hours, and we should get the latest news. His own son Zakki Bey, was travelling with the Valy, and he was a friend of Mr. S.'s. So we were fain to be content with the hope that perhaps the consul also would be of the party, as, in a few lines that had been waiting some time for us at Deyr from him, he had spoken of his journey as a settled plan. But why had he failed us? This we could not understand.

The next day Huseyn was busy with the Valy, and left us pretty much to ourselves; and, when we met again, there certainly was a *gêne* in his manner. Considering the circumstances of the case, the unfortunate issue of the war with Russia, the denuded state of the garrisons on the Turkish frontier, and the intrigues and disputes which were agitating the desert round him, I think it is not surprising that our persistence in visiting the Bedouin tribes, in spite of all warnings and all hindrances, should have aroused suspicions of us in Huseyn's official

mind; and I suspect that the good man had taken counsel of his fellow-governor about the course to be pursued with us; for on the evening following that of the Valy's arrival, we received a polite message from the latter, begging that we would do him the favour of calling at the Serai.

Now, if this Valy had happened to be a man of the old school like Akif Pasha and others whom one could name, I think it might have fared ill with us at this conjuncture, for suspicion of us, as I have said, was not unreasonable, and the two Orientals together, taking counsel of each other's fears, might in the end have plucked up courage to put a forcible term to our adventures by sending us back under escort to Aleppo. We could hardly have complained had they done so. But, fortunately for us, the Valy was a man of a very different type from any we had hitherto met in Turkey, —indeed it would be doing him an injustice to talk of him as in any way an Oriental;—and he at once understood the situation and recognised us for what we were, mere tourists and sight-seers. His discrimination saved us.

Kadderly Pasha is a Turk, and a Europeanised Turk; yet he impressed me very favourably. He speaks excellent French; and we not only had no difficulty in explaining our position to him and satisfying any curiosity he may have had as to our movements, but we also were able to have a very interesting conversation with him about the general

politics of Europe and the Empire. His history, I believe, is this. As a young man he was taken up by Vefyk Effendi, who with Midhat Pasha was anxious to form a school of politicians in Turkey with modern views and modern principles. These loudly professed the doctrine, new to Ottoman ears, that honesty was the best policy, and carried out, I believe, their principle fairly. Unfortunately the band of followers was never numerous, and Kadderly seems to have been the only one who distinguished himself in the world. He had educated himself when past twenty, and after filling various minor offices, had now been promoted by his first patron to the rank of Valy.

Kadderly Pasha was straight from Stamboul, having left the capital not three weeks before, and had all the contempt, which a European, fresh from witnessing the great events of history, (for he had left the Russians at the gates of Constantinople), could not help feeling for the petty politics of Arabia. He did not, in fact, so much as ask what was going on among the Bedouins, but ignored the whole matter, affecting only an interest in the ruins of El Haddr and the prospects of a Euphrates valley railway. This European line of thought suited us admirably; and we discoursed, as learnedly as we could, on archæology and civil engineering, and a little on the attempted improvements of his former predecessor and patron Midhat at Bagdad.

On these the Valy spoke as sensibly as a first

commissioner of works. "Three things," he said, "are necessary in a governor, who would effect real good in the department he administers—'*vouloir, savoir, et pouvoir!*' Midhat had the first and last qualifications, but not the second. He was a half-educated man." With regard to another important matter, he remarked that the first reform wanted in Turkey was the establishment of real religious equality. Toleration already existed; but something more was required. The law should make no distinction in dealing with men of different creeds, any more than with men of different races. Many races and many creeds were comprised in the Ottoman Empire.

Wilfrid. "Yet the Mussulman religion invented toleration many centuries before it was accepted by the Christian governments of Europe."

Kadderly. "Say rather, *reinvented* it, for toleration was always the law of ancient Rome. This was in its day a great step in advance, but Islam has now fallen behind Christendom. It is time that religious bitterness should cease in Asia as it has in Europe."

We did not venture to touch upon the more delicate point of official honesty. We felt that we might be treading on dangerous ground; for, although it was difficult to imagine a gentleman, with such excellent principles as the Valy's, putting his hand into the public purse, the chances of our having hit upon an immaculate governor were so

small in Turkey, that it was mere common prudence to say nothing which might offend.

We turned the conversation, instead, on the practical liberty, which undoubtedly exists in Turkey, and on which we could with sincerity be eloquent. Wilfrid told the story of a conversation we had once had with a zaptieh in Asia Minor, which, as it contains a moral, may be worth relating here. This zaptieh had been complaining to us of certain official malpractices which, although he was himself an agent of the law, had struck him as needing reform in his own country, and mentioned the report current among his fellows that England was the land of liberty. "Every one there," he said, "we know is free and happy, and honest men may do all they like, without interference from any one." "It is true," we answered, "that things with us are not as they are with you. You, Mohammed, for instance, would not be allowed to take this ploughshare, which you have found in the field, to make your fire with or turn your horse into this standing corn to graze; but all countries are not equally favoured, and there is liberty and liberty. What should you say for instance of a land, where a poor man, travelling along the high road, might not collect a few dry sticks to make a fire at all, or let his donkey graze on so much as the grass by the wayside, or even lie down himself to sleep under a hedge, without being seized by the zaptiehs, dragged before the cadi, and left to spend the night in

prison?" "No, no," said the man "you are laughing at me. There is no such country as that, or people would have gone to live elsewhere long ago."

Kadderly Pasha was much tickled by this little story, and agreed with us that the Sultan's subjects were not altogether so unhappy, only happiness was one thing and progress was another. Of the politics of Europe he really showed great knowledge, and even understood something of the state of parties in England, appreciating accurately enough the causes of the agitation, got up last year by the liberals, on the Eastern question. He was polite enough not to dwell on the vacillating policy of our Government, thinking only that England was making a mistake in allowing Turkey to be devoured. On the whole we felt that we had been talking to an agreeable and superior man and one who would be inexcusable, on any plea of ignorance, if he failed to do his duty at Bagdad.

An important consequence to us of this conversation was that it reinstated us in public estimation, and, especially, in that of Huseyn. He, as a mere *mutesherif* and an Aleppine, was treated with very scant courtesy by the Valy, and, in his own house, only sat down by request, and on the edge of his chair, in the great man's presence. We, on the contrary, were given the best places on the divan, and conversed familiarly, and as long as we liked, in a foreign tongue which nobody understood, and which therefore made the more impression. For what

Turkish is to Arabic, in public estimation, that French is to Turkish, the language of the superior race. Although the Valy took his departure next morning, the prestige of our reception remained; and Huseyn was again all that we could wish.

We had not, hitherto, ventured to breathe a word of the negotiation intrusted to us by Faris, although the Mollah, who was constantly in and out of the house, had hinted more than once that it was time to begin. But we had felt that, until our own character was cleared up, we should only be prejudicing our friend's interests by advocating them. Now however there was no such reason to deter us, and we took advantage of the first opportunity to open the subject. Zakki Bey, the Pasha's eldest son, had arrived with the Valy; and we found him a nice boy of eighteen or twenty, with a good ingenuous countenance, pretty manners, and a fair education. He was a *Kátib*, or clerk in the "Chamber of Writing," a public office at Aleppo; and with him we speedily made friends. It was no difficult matter to interest him in the cause of the Bedouins, for these to a youth of any imagination must always have a certain attraction; and he knew of his father's recent overtures to Faris, and of the official friendship which had been begun between them.

"My father," he said quite simply, "is as a father to all these people. The Bedouins are his children, and I know that Faris is his especial favourite. If he would allow me, I would go myself to see your

friends the Shammar and set things right, but he is afraid of accidents happening to me on the road."

We told him, then, to explain to his father that there was great danger of the friendly footing on which they stood being disturbed by a misunderstanding. Faris had done work for the Pasha and had not been paid for it; and his people were in a state bordering on revolt. Zakki was concerned to learn this, and promised that his father should hear of it. The Pasha, accordingly, when he came the next morning, as was his custom, to pay us a visit, began himself upon the subject. He admitted with great frankness that the sum demanded was really owing, but declared most solemnly that the treasury of the Serai was empty. Not a sixpence could be got from Aleppo, and everybody's pay, his own included, had long been in arrear. This, I dare say, was true enough.

"Faris," he said, "must not suppose that he is the only man who has been doing work gratis for the Sultan this year. We are all on the same footing." He, the Pasha, had offered him paper money; but the Bedouins, stupid fellows, understand nothing but silver pieces, and he must take patience till the money (he expected it daily) should come from Aleppo. He was quite ready to believe that Faris had the best intentions in the world, and that the complaints of the Buggára were, as he had assured us, unfounded; but the Skeykh was responsible for his men's conduct, and could keep them in order if he liked. Everybody in fact must have patience.

With this we were obliged to content ourselves,—reporting the result of our negotiation to the Mollah, and making him a little present to console him for the want of better success.

We had now our own plans to attend to, for we had been four days at Deyr, and still there was no sign or word from Mr. S. This is how we set about it. First of all the spy Nejran had to be dismissed; and this was done, without ceremony on either side, Wilfrid merely bidding him be off, and he replying "*keyfic*" (as you please). Then it was necessary to get news of the Ánazeh without exciting the Pasha's suspicions.

Now Faris when we left him had given us, as a parting gift, a boy who had been in his service, and who he thought would be useful to us as camel-driver, in the place of Nejran; and this boy seemed suited for our purpose. Ghánim, for such was his name, was a strange wild-looking youth, with a merry smile, white teeth, and a peculiar glitter in his eyes, which were half green, half hazel, like a cat's, while long wisps and plaits of hair hung all about his face in picturesque confusion. There was something singularly attractive in his manner; and his voice had a caressing, supplicating tone, which won our attention at once. He told us he was a Jeláas, one of Ibn Shaalán's people, but that he had left his tribe when very young to take service with Abd-ul-Kerim, as groom or rough-rider, for he was a capital horseman, and had lived with the Shammar

till Abd-ul-Kerim's death. He had shared in the flight of Amsheh to Nejd, but had returned and gone to Suliman ibn Mershid's tent and lived with the Gomussa, till his new master too fell a victim to the Turks, and then Faris had taken him back. He now desired to return to his own people, but would follow us meanwhile whithersoever we would.

Our caravan, with the tents and mares, had remained outside the town, for we had taken this precaution to preserve our liberty of action, in case of difficulties arising; and every day we went out to spend some hours with our camels, and see that all was going on well with them, and learn the news from outside. On these occasions Ghánim would bring out a curious little fiddle he had with him, made of parchment, and a bow strung with horse-hair, and, on this very unpretending instrument, would play to us and sing impromptu songs, some of which were pretty and all exceedingly interesting. There was one, especially our favourite, which began "When Abd-ul-Kerím was dead and all his tribe were scattered," and another, whose tune might have passed in Spain as a Malagueña. At these times Ghánim's face had a look almost of inspiration as, with knitted brows and trembling lips, he produced an alternation of chords and discords, worthy of Wagner himself, and sang the glories of the departed heroes he had served. With all this, he was an intelligent lad and could turn his hand to anything, and to him we entrusted the mission of finding out

some agent or friend of the Ánazeh, for such there always are in the towns, and bringing him to us.

He was not long executing the commission, and on the evening of the 22nd, came to us with two men, one apparently a citizen of Deyr, but who refused to give us his name, and the other a thin dark-visaged Bedouin, whom Ghánim said he knew as Ali of the Mehéd, a follower and distant relation of Jedáan himself. These people informed us in a confidential whisper, for fear of eavesdroppers, that the Ánazeh were on their march northwards, and already within not many days' march of Deyr, somewhere down in the Hamád, the great plain which stretches southwards from the Bíshari hills, as far as Jebel Shammar.

This was great news indeed; and Ali agreed, for a small sum, two mejidies, to take us to Jedáan, but cautioned us to say nothing of where we were going to Huseyn, or to mention that we had seen him, "For," he explained, "the Pasha is a rogue, and prevented you from seeing Jedáan before, when he was close by, and will prevent you again, if he can. Jedáan knows you were here with the Consul Beg last month, and is angry with the Pasha for having interfered with your visit." It was therefore settled that we were to start, as it were for Tudmur (Palmyra), and that Ali was to be on the look-out to join us as soon as we were well out of sight, when we could alter our course and strike down into the Hamád, straight for Jedáan. The exact position of

the Ánazeh tents Ali either could not or would not describe, but we thought we should run no risk in trusting ourselves to his guidance, and we were determined at all hazards to see the Ánazeh and get away from Deyr.

As it had been settled, so it was done. The next morning we informed Huseyn that we were tired of waiting for Mr. S. and must start without him. It was getting late in the season and hot weather might be expected to set in; we had affairs at home, which would not wait, and we must make the best of our way westwards. He suggested that Aleppo would be our nearest road, but this we would not hear of. The Ánazeh, as he himself had told us, were far away to the south, fighting the Roála, and there could be no danger in going to Damascus by way of Tudmur, and perhaps the Consul might yet join us there. If we *did* meet Jedáan on our way, why, so much the better. We had always wished to see him; but, in any case, we must be off. We suggested that it would be a great pleasure to us if Zakki his son were to join our party. He did not affect to be pleased at this idea, said he had no soldiers to send with us, and that the Tudmur road was quite unsafe. He could not possibly allow his son to go that way; and he advised us most strongly not to think of it. But we insisted so pertinaciously that he said he would see what could be done.

There were some Tudmuris at Deyr, who might be willing to go with us, and he would send for

them. A little negotiation at the same time was entered into, about a certain mare of the Pasha's, which there had been question, ever since our first visit, of our buying. Still Huseyn was evidently far from pleased, and, though we affected an extreme unconcern about the arrangements made, it was evident that difficulties, perhaps troubles, were in store for us before we could be clear away from Deyr. It was most fortunate during all these negotiations, that we were no longer in the Pasha's house, for otherwise we should no doubt have had much greater trouble in communicating with the Mehéd. As it was, a servant of the house was very fond of hanging about listening, whenever conversation was going on; and our Christian landlord himself, with his fat mother, dropped in from time to time. I have little doubt that any information they picked up went straight to the Serai.

These Christians had the impertinence, on the night of our arrival at their house, to sit down with us at table, on chairs, and even to make conversation before us; but this was too much, and we speedily set them in their proper place, which was on the floor, according to the custom of the country. We were not *their* guests but the Pasha's. The only trustworthy person in the establishment was old Mariam, the cook's wife, with whom we left a letter explaining our plans to the Consul, in case he might yet by accident arrive at Deyr. But of this there now seemed little chance.

CHAPTER XVII.

"With stout iron shoes be my Pegasus shod,
For my road is a rough one,—flint, rubble and clod."
OWEN MEREDITH.

Once more in the desert—Our guide fails us—Mohammed el Taleb—We gather manna—Arrested—The Tudmur road—Fox-hunting—A visit to the Amúr robbers—We arrive at Palmyra.

Sunday, March 24.—We have left Deyr, and are once more in the desert, *our own* desert I had nearly said, for indeed we are more at home in it than in the towns; and yet I feel out of spirits. This new venture has not begun auspiciously; and, but for Wilfrid, who suffers from the confinement of indoor life, I would willingly have put off starting for a few days more, to give the Consul a last chance of arriving. It is almost necessary to have an introduction to the people we are in search of; and now we are without one, for Ali the Mehéd has failed us, and it seems very like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay, to be starting off into the Hamád alone after the Ánazeh. Their whereabouts, even on the map, we do not know. Still, after waiting till this morning for the post to come in, and then receiving no news from Aleppo, it seemed foolish to waste more time. The caravan road down the river is

open, or the post would not have arrived, for, though the river has risen nine or ten feet in the last three days, it has not yet cut the track; and the cause of Mr. S.'s delay must be looked for elsewhere.

Wilfrid, to ensure a start to-day, had the camels brought into the town over-night, and loaded the first thing in the morning, and sent them on, with orders to wait for us just out of sight of Deyr, over the brow of the hill. He then went to the Serai and announced our departure. The Pasha affected at first extreme surprise to hear that we were leaving him, although we had told him of our intention yesterday, and asked in which direction we were going. "We are starting," Wilfrid said, "on the Tudmur road, and if we do not come across the Ánazeh, whom of course we should like to see, we shall go on as far as that town, and so to Damascus. We think that perhaps the Consul Beg has been delayed at Aleppo, and may have gone straight to Tudmur to save time, and that we may find him there."—*Huseyn.* "But the road is not safe; it is impossible you should go alone. You would not find your way; there is no water, and the country is inhabited only by robbers."—*Wilfrid.* "Yet we came through the Jezíreh alone, and no harm happened to us. We are well armed and well mounted; and you have told us that the Ánazeh are far away, fighting the Roála in the south. Common robbers would not venture to attack us."—*Huseyn.* "You

must wait at least for the caravan which is going to-morrow. I will send for the chief men in it, and they shall be answerable for your safety."—*Wilfrid.* "Unfortunately our camels have already marched, and if we do not set out soon we shall not overtake them."—*Huseyn* (to his servants). "Send for the Tudmuri, and tell them to come to me at once."

The Tudmuri appeared. There were two of them, respectable, well-to-do people, if one could judge by their clothes; the elder, a man of fifty, with a handsome, but, as I thought, foxy face; the other, a very fine-looking young fellow, with an out-spoken manner which impressed us favourably. They said it was quite impossible their caravan could be ready to-day; but to-morrow they would be at the Pasha's orders. Wilfrid, however, insisted that at least we must join our camels; and, after a long argument and a private conversation between Huseyn and the Tudmuri, the younger man was sent to fetch his mare and told to accompany us, as soon as we had had breakfast. This was perhaps not quite what we wanted; but, as we were really in the Pasha's hands about going at all, Wilfrid did not think it prudent to make any further objections; so, after a last meal and the usual farewells and good wishes exchanged, we rode away for the second time from Deyr, with a strange mixture of gratitude to Huseyn for his kindness, and of resentment at his interference with our plans. It was a great thing however to be gone; and, in spite of

the proverb which forbids one saying, "Fountain, I will never drink of thy waters again," I think we both made a mental resolution to sit at the Pasha's table no more.

Time however, precious time, had been wasted; and, when we joined our camels at the appointed place, there was no Mehéd with them. What has become of him we do not know; but we think he must have been scared away by the sight of two soldiers, whom Huseyn has after all thought fit to send after us. This has interfered sadly with Wilfrid's peace of mind, and made him very bitter against Turkish ways and Turkish authority, indeed against authority of any kind, for in the desert, if anywhere, one feels that freedom is a right. So, although the sky overhead was blue and the sun shone, we marched on in dogged silence, making ourselves as disagreeable as we possibly could to the poor soldiers, who, I dare say, are quite as unhappy at having to do their duty as we are to be the cause of it.

Hanna, too, is in the dumps at having lost sight of the Euphrates and at this new wilfulness of ours in going out he knows not whither. Ferhán, honest man that he is, is stolidly indifferent where he goes, so long as his camels are fed and he is allowed to do his duty by them. Ali, the cavass, is no longer with us; he could not resist the glory of going back to Bagdad in the Valy's suite, and bade us good-bye some days ago. The Jelâas boy is the

only merry one of the party, for he is going home. As to Mohammed, the Tudmuri, we hardly yet know what to make of him, except that he seems anxious to oblige and to be of use. He is certainly an ornamental addition to our party, as he is well mounted on a grey Shućmeh Sbah, and carries a lance fifteen feet long. He seems more of a Bedouin than a townsman, and Wilfrid thinks he may be won over to our plans; but first we must get rid of the soldiers, and it is agreed that we are to starve them out by making things as uncomfortable for them as we can. So they have been told that they must expect no rations from us, and must keep watch all night. We think that in this way they may be induced to go home.

We are encamped in a snug wady, about ten miles south-west of Deyr; and Mohammed has been teaching Wilfrid how to find truffles, of which there are great numbers now. They are found by digging with a stick, wherever a crack is seen in the ground or an appearance observed of a heaving of the soil, just as one sees over tulip bulbs in the spring. There, with a little practice, the kemeyes are discovered, only a few inches from the surface. They are white and soft, like potatoes, but much lighter; and some we found this evening were as big as both Mohammed's fists. They occur in light soil, where there are no stones, and prefer rather high ground. Wilfrid, though a novice in the art, picked up a dozen or so after we encamped, enough

to make a meal. They can be eaten raw, but are much better boiled. It has been suggested that this is the manna which was eaten in the wilderness.

March 25.—Fortune has favoured us in our plan of getting rid of the soldiers. A wolf came last night and prowled about our camp, paying such a disagreeable amount of attention to a mare and foal belonging to one of them, that this morning he begged to be allowed to go back to Deyr. His companion, too, followed suit, explaining that he had only the day before come back from the war in Armenia, and that it was very hard on him to be sent out on such an expedition, without even a single night at home. We sympathised most heartily with both of them, of course, and readily agreed to let them go. It was necessary, however, to give them a paper of dismissal, so Wilfrid wrote a line in French to Zakki Beg, who understands a few words of that language, explaining that we really did not want an escort, and had nothing to feed the men with, while we had full confidence in Mohammed as a protector. With this document and a shilling a-piece for bakshísh, they departed homewards in high delight.

Still Ali the Mehéd did not make his appearance, as we quite expected he would as soon as the soldiers were gone, and the only thing to be done has been to make friends with Mohammed the Tudmuri, really a very excellent fellow. This Wilfrid proceeded to do, engaging him in conversation and

leading it to the subject of the Ánazeh, some of whom, it turns out, he knows or at any rate has seen; for he talks about Súliman ibn Mershid and his death at Deyr. He was also, he tells us, acquainted with Akhmet Beg the Moáli Sheykh, whom he describes as the finest man ever seen in the desert, as tall as himself (Mohammed is fully six feet high). Jedáan, he says, is nothing much to look at, but a wonderful horseman. He knows nothing, or at any rate will tell nothing of the present whereabouts of any of the Bedouins, but says they are sure to pass by Tudmur in the course of the spring. They do so, every year, on their way north. He himself is the son of the Sheykh of Tudmur; and his family is descended from a certain prophet, called the Nebbi Taleb, who converted the villages of Tudmur and Arak to Mahometanism; but he does not know how long ago. His family came originally from the Beni Láam, in Nejd, and established itself first in the Jôf. He has relations still there and is going next year to get a wife from his own people. About going to see the Ánazeh now, he should have no objection to go with us, but he does not know where they are. We had better, he says, go on to Tudmur. His uncle and the caravan will overtake us to-night.

We had not gone far, when a large caravan of some two hundred camels came in sight, travelling from the west towards us; and we galloped up to get news. We found they were from Sokhne, a

village between us and Tudmur, and bound for Deyr to buy corn. Mohammed knew some of the people, who by the way were all armed with guns, and who got them out for use when they saw us galloping up; and an animated conversation ensued about the price of cereals on the Euphrates. To each in turn as he came up we put the question, "Have you seen anything of the Ánazeh?" and each in turn answered, "Hamdullah * (praise be to God), we have seen no Bedouins." The last man in the caravan hailed us from a distance, and asked Wilfrid if he could give him any news of Faris. The question was curiously *à propos*, and we stopped and had some conversation with him. He told us he was the Sheykh of Sokhne and that Faris Jerba was his brother. A month ago some of the Jerba had taken camels belonging to him in a raid they made upon the villagers of Sokhne, and he was going to Faris to get them back in right of his brotherhood. We told him, much to his surprise, that Wilfrid also was Faris's brother, and that he would find him on the Khàbur. He then informed us that though nothing had yet been seen of the Ánazeh this spring, it was reported that they were on their way north, not more than three or four days' journey from Bir, a well and guard-house we should come to this evening. Wilfrid scribbled a note to the Consul, telling of the break-down of our

* Spelt as pronounced both by the Bedouins, and by the inhabitants of the desert towns.

plan through the non-appearance of our accomplice the Mehéd, and proposing a rendezvous at Sokhne on our way to Tudmur. This he gave to the man, who promised if Mr. S. should arrive while he was at Deyr, to let him have it. We then rode on.

After this we passed no one until about noon, when we came in sight of some tents rather out of our road, and to these we went also to ask for news. They belonged to a party of Abu Serai, one of the Euphrates tribes, and I believe, a section of the Aghedáat, but the men were away, gone with kemeyes to Damascus, and women only were at home. These received us very hospitably, bringing milk and lebben, but could give us no information. They had come out so far from the river, it seemed, to gather truffles, for besides those that the men had taken away to sell, there were plenty of others sliced up and drying in the sun on the roofs of their tents. The women were very merry and good-humoured, and I think I never saw such swarms of children. It shows how little real danger there is in the desert, that these people should be left all alone with their flocks of sheep, and with only a few old men and boys to protect them, while their husbands were away for perhaps a month. Yet they showed no sign of anxiety.

In the course of the morning we had come across a number of large bustards, but they were too wild to stalk, and now at about one o'clock we entered a wady (Wady Mefass), cut pretty deeply in the plain,

and found there rock pigeons and partridges, showing that there must be water close at hand. Wilfrid shot three partridges, and in climbing to the edge of the ravine caught sight of the guard-house of Bir, lying in the Wady about a mile ahead of us. We would willingly have avoided the place, for Mohammed informed us it was occupied, and we have now a perfect horror of soldiers and the police; but it was absolutely necessary we should fill our waterskins, and the only well for many miles was there. We are rather afraid still of the Pasha's suddenly sending after us or coming himself, like Pharaoh, who repented that he had let the children of Israel go, and would have liked to hide our encampment, but this necessity of water compelled us, and luckily, as it turned out, for we have obtained authentic news.

The well of Bir (as you say the "harbour of Oporto") is an important feature in this part of the world, for it is the only watering-place between Deyr and Sokhne, and it has been occupied for some years as a strategical point by the government. There is a square guard-house on the usual Euphrates model, and we found it occupied by a sergeant and three men. The building was in rather a dilapidated state, as Jedáan burnt all that could be burnt in it last winter on his way from the Bíshari hills, which, by the way, we saw pretty plainly this morning. The well is a very ancient one, cased with solid stone and about sixty feet

deep. The water is not particularly good, but, they tell us, never fails. It is drawn by means of a leathern bucket, but one of the zaptiehs having accidentally dropped his *aghál* (head rope) into the well, climbed down to fetch it by some steps there are in the masonry. The men were, of course, very polite and very anxious that we should stop the night in their barracks, but this we would not do, as Wilfrid had found a nice grassy spot about a mile off down the Wady, and there we now are.

As we were pitching our tents, a string of camels came by from the south, and we learned that they were a party of Abu Kamís Arabs come to fetch water for their camp, which is a day's march from Bir, and that only a day's march beyond them are the tents of the Ajájera, the advanced guard of the Ánazeh, while Jedáan himself with all the Sebáa are just beyond these. This is indeed good news, and now we are sorry at having sent the note about Sokhne to Mr. S.; but we cannot miss the opportunity, and it is settled we are to go back with the Abu Kamís to-morrow morning, stay a night with them, and then on next day to the Ánazeh. Our only anxiety is lest the caravan should arrive before we manage to get away, as there may be soldiers with it, and they may have orders to keep us on the Tudmur road. Mohammed, however, seems disposed to go with us, so let us hope that all is well. In the meantime this is a delightful spot—a hollow full of deep pasture, where the mares and the white

donkey are feeding. Ferhán is sitting on a point of rock above, calling every now and then to the camels "*Ha-ó! ha-ó! ha-ó!*" whereat they stop and turn their heads round to listen. Hanna has got the three partridges in a pot, and is very merry, while Ghánim has brought up his *rebáb* and is tuning it for one of his chants. There are a pair of kestrels wheeling about, and I think they have a nest somewhere close by. The evening is calm, and we are all in good spirits again.

March 26.—Alas! alas! I suppose I must have forgotten to say "inshallah" when I wrote my journal last night, for dinner was hardly over and the mares tied up and our beds laid, when a sound of shouting in the direction of Bir announced that some people were coming our way. For a moment we deluded ourselves with the vain hope that it might be robbers, or merely some of the Abu Kamís going home, but our hearts misgave us already that something worse had happened. In a few minutes, four zaptiehs appeared at the door of the servants' tent, piled their arms in front of the fire, and sat down. Neither Wilfrid nor I had the heart to inquire what the meaning of this was, but Mohammed shortly afterwards came to our tent with the message, which we guessed before it was out of his lips. The Pasha had sent an express, with orders that we were to proceed no further, but to wait for the caravan, which would arrive to-morrow, and then we should receive further instructions.

The news sounded very ominously, and Wilfrid said to me in English, "I suppose we may consider ourselves under arrest." But to Mohammed and the others it was necessary to affect a cheerful willingness to do anything that Huseyn might think best for our safety; so Wilfrid went to the zaptiehs and bade them make themselves at home, which indeed they had every intention of doing already, for they had orders to keep guard over us all night. He learned, in talking to them, that Ali the Mehéd had passed through Bir that morning, and had stopped, as Arabs always do, for a talk, and that he had told them of the two mejidies we had given him, and I daresay a great deal more, — all which proves that he must be a chatterbox, even if he has not betrayed us to the Pasha. We were far too miserable to sleep, but spent the night in vain regrets at our folly in sending back the two soldiers so soon to Deyr. They of course had gone back post-haste to get home and had put Huseyn on the alert, and he, acting with more promptitude than we could have expected of him, had sent off this disgusting messenger to stop us. The annoying part of it is that if we had only waited till we got to Bir and then sent them away, all would have gone right. But at the time we did not know the existence of this guard-house, and we expected Ali the Mehéd to meet us, and we had caught at the first chance of being rid of our tormentors. Full of gloomy forebodings, the least of which was an immediate return

under escort to Deyr, and the worst a summary execution as Russian spies, we passed a miserable night, sometimes dreaming wildly of flight on our mares, sometimes of bribing the zaptiehs, and sometimes of resistance by force of arms. But in the morning more prudent counsels prevailed, and we agreed to wait for the caravan and learn the worst.

The worst has proved to be better than we expected. The order was nothing more than that we were to keep close to the caravan till we got to Tudmur, Mohammed and his uncle Hassan being held responsible to the Pasha for our safe arrival there. We agreed then to go on for the present in the direction required of us, trusting to have another opportunity of eluding our guardians and getting away; but for the moment our hopes are frustrated. We cannot accompany the Abu Kamís. Mohammed, who is really a good fellow, makes very light of the Pasha's order, and as soon as ever the caravan appeared in sight, said we might as well go on. It didn't matter so long as we kept on the Tudmur road, and it was no use waiting for the others if we had sooner be alone. So on we went, the zaptiehs making no opposition. Wilfrid now spoke seriously to Mohammed, told him exactly what it was we wanted, and asked him to help us. He promised him at the same time a handsome present on the day we should reach Jedáan's camp, and the Tudmuri without more ado promised to do his best. He only insisted that at present we must go

on at least as far as Sokhne, where we should be certain to get information, and probably someone who could take us to Jedáan. He himself could not do this without assistance, as he knew no more than we did where the Ánazeh might be, and had never gone down far into the Hamád. It was not a place to go to alone, as there was no water, at least none that could be found by merely looking about for it. It was very hot, and we had only two waterskins with us, so we were fain to be content and wait for better times. This settled, Mohammed became very confidential, and told us with much humour, how he had received special injunctions from the Pasha not to let us out of his sight. Huseyn's last words to Mohammed, holding him familiarly by the ear, after the manner of the great Napoleon, had been, "Mind, whatever happens, they are not to go near the Bedouins. Take them straight to Tudmur, and see them on without any more nonsense to Damascus—and mind, no Bedouins, no Bedouins!" Mohammed laughed loud and long at the recollection of this scene, and of the Pasha holding him by the ear. "They are all pigs," he added, "these Turks."

About two miles from Bir, we came upon the remains of a subterranean aqueduct, leading from the well, and a large tank, probably of Roman construction, by which the plain was anciently irrigated, for in winter there is no want of water underground in the wady, and here it had been stored. Mohammed

called it El Khabra. This was no doubt in ancient times a high road from Palmyra, and, likely enough, the very one along which Zenobia fled when defeated by the Romans. There is now a fairly well-defined camel-track, as some of the corn traffic between Bagdad and Damascus passes this way. The soil was light and sandy, and full of kemeyes, which every here and there cropped up above ground. Mohammed tells us that they sell for one piastre and a half the oke, or two-pence halfpenny the pound, in Damascus, and two and a half piastres at Aleppo. This year they are so plentiful, that while we were pitching our tents last night, Mohammed picked up a large basketful in little over a quarter of an hour. I counted them. There were a hundred and two,—about the size of potatoes,—but a few were very large, and one measured twelve inches round. He reckoned them to weigh six okes. So that a man might get a camel load, two hundred okes, worth thirty-five or forty shillings in the day, but for this he would have to travel a couple of hundred miles, and fast too, for the kemeyes will not keep more than a few days, unless sliced up and dried, when they last practically for ever. Mohammed only recollects one season as good as the present one, and that was when he was a boy twenty years ago. The heavy rains and snows this winter are probably the cause of the present plenty, at which all the country is rejoicing. The tribes are now independent of corn for the year.

We made a rather long dull march to-day, and the sun was very oppressive, so much so that Wilfrid who rode his delul all the morning was constantly dropping off to sleep and almost off the camel. The only amusement was a fox-hunt which Wilfrid and Mohammed enjoyed in the afternoon without me. They had a breakneck gallop over rotten ground for a couple of miles, and came back in triumph with the skin. It is nearly white. We are encamped this evening in a great open plain, the outskirts of the Hamád, having the Bíshari hills to the north-west of us, a long ridge, the continuation in fact of the Sinjár, which under different names stretches all the way from Mósul to Damascus.

March 27.—Passed another caravan from Damascus, fourteen days on the road. They report that a certain truffle hunter of Tudmur, being down in the Hamád, met a party of Sebáa Ánazeh some days ago, with two hundred camels they had taken from the Roála. Jedáan was said to be coming north, having, they assured us, "ruined" his enemies. We are pretty sure, then, to get news of our friends at Tudmur, if not before. These camel men are not by any means so anxious to meet the Ánazeh as we are, for they are making their journey now, on the strength of the Bedouins being away south. I suppose we are nearly the first travellers along this road, who have watched for spears on the horizon with any feelings but anxiety. As it is, I think even a ghazú would be welcome to Wilfrid.

Another fox-hunt; but this time an unsuccessful one, for he had too much start, and after three miles at a racing pace, we got among some low hills where he escaped, though only a few yards in front of us. The mares do their work in a marvellous manner, considering that they have to travel every day and are only grass fed, but Hagar, directly she sees a fox, goes off, and nothing will stop her. I follow as I can on Tamarisk, who, though slow, is a stayer. We also saw three gazelles, and tried to get some *houbáras*, or frilled bustards, by riding round them in a circle as we have done in the Sahara, but here they refuse to hide their heads in the bushes, and take flight always just too soon. At eleven o'clock we came to a broad flat wady with white chalk cliffs, in the middle of which was a small pool of rainwater, rapidly drying up, but still sufficient for our purpose of filling the skins. Several false snipes were running along the edge of it, and water wagtails.

After this we left the track, I hardly know where, and took a point more to the south so as to avoid a low ridge of hills, which is a sort of spur from the main ridge towards which we have gradually been converging. We can see the white chalk cliffs under which Mohammed tells us the village of Sokhne (hot) lies, so called, not because it is, as it must be, a little furnace in summer, but because there are hot springs. We do not care to go into the village, but intend to send Ghánim in to-morrow as we pass

south of it to get news. We have found a splendid plain of rich grass, where we have stopped,—enough to feed all the Ánazeh camp, if they come this way, for a week. Mohammed calls it Wadi Er Ghôtha, and says there must have been an immense downpour of rain some time this year, as he has never seen such grass before so far from the hills. Ghánim has been singing all to-day to a tune which runs thus :—

March 28.—A wild blustering morning, and we half decided on stopping where we were, but the rain held off, though it blew a hurricane all day from the west. We sent Mohammed for news to Sokhne, which was not more than five miles away, and engaged to meet him again later at a certain pool of water he said we should find in a certain wady. This led to our missing each other, for though we found a pool, it was not the right pool, and we saw no more of Mohammed all day. When we found he did not join us, we were in no hurry to go on, so we climbed up to the top of a tallish cliff from which there was a capital view, and where we got a little shelter under an old wall from the wind. In front of us, and apparently about three miles off, we could see the village of Sokhne, a wretched hamlet,

set on the face of a white slope of chalk, which ended in the cliffs called Uthâhek. To the left of it stood eleven olive trees in a row, showing very blackly against the white ground. It then occurred to us that we might perhaps find some one in the village who could take us to Jedâan without going further, and we sent Ghânim in on the white donkey. We timed his start and his arrival, for we could see him all the way; and, though we had both calculated the distance at three miles, he did it in sixteen minutes, for the donkey is extraordinarily fast, going at a sort of run. Ghânim was not long away, and brought no news that was of any good to us. Mohammed had been there and was gone, and nobody could tell anything clear about the Anazeh. Nearly all the men of the village were away after kemeyes, and though one person had spoken of Jedâan's being three days' journey to the south, he either did not know where or was afraid to go with us. A band of robbers had attacked the village the night before and carried off horses, camels, and sheep belonging to a caravan. So, having wasted half the morning, we went on in the direction of Tudmur, that is to say to the south west.

Our way lay up a long broad valley, with a line of perfectly regular cliffs to our left and tall hills to our right. Down this the wind blew with a violence which I can only compare with a Mistral in the valley of the Rhône, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the camels could make head against

it. It was bitterly cold in spite of all our cloaks and wraps, and we were chilled to the bone. Thus we struggled on for about ten miles, when we came to the head of the valley, where there stood the ruins of a tower; and here we again hit upon the caravan road, and, immediately afterwards, on Mohammed, who had been all over the country looking for us and, by his account, must have ridden something like forty miles. His white mare looked as if what he said was true. He told us that the hills to our right were the Jebel Amúr, noted for robbers, and wished us to push on to Arak, another village some way in front of us, but we have had enough of struggling against the wind for to-day, and having come to a place where there is sufficient shelter, we have stopped. It is horribly cold, and the poor beasts will have a sad night of it.

March 29.—A good watch was kept all night by Mohammed and Ghánim, who never seems to sleep except sometimes on one of the camels in the daytime, and we made an early start, the wind less violent than yesterday, and no longer in our faces. At twelve we got to Arak. Like Sokhne, it is a wretched little place, containing perhaps fifty houses, and surrounded by a mud wall, which looks as if a man determined to get in might easily push it down. Arak's *raison d'être* appears in a spring of indifferent water, sufficiently abundant to irrigate some dozen acres of land, now green with barley. It would seem, according to Mohammed, that there

is a chain of such little villages at irregular intervals all along the foot of the hills from Damascus to the Euphrates, *oases* one may call them. Of these, Tudmur is the most important. Their existence must have begun in ancient times as halting-places on the Palmyra road, and they were very likely of importance then, but now they represent only just the value of the land their springs can irrigate. Like all the villages bordering on the desert, they are dreary to the last degree, every blade of grass and every stick of brushwood having been devoured for miles round them. It is at or near Arak, however, that Mohammed tells us his ancestor the prophet is buried, and he will not admit that it is not an important place. Mohammed ibn Hanafiyeh ibn Ali ibn Abu-Taleb,—such is the holy man's name who converted Arak, then a Kafir town, to Islam, and from whom our Mohammed Abdallah claims descent.

The only interest these little desert villages have is, that they give one a good idea of what the towns in Central Arabia must be like. I fancy there is no difference between them and the villages of the Jóf, or indeed of any part of Arabia. The population, though not quite pure, is mainly composed of real Arabs, and has little in common with that of the Syrian towns beyond the language. Mohammed tells us that several of the best families here and at Tudmur came from the Beni Laam, one branch of which is settled beyond Bagdad, and

another in the Jôf. He took us in to drink coffee with the Sheykh of the village, a very worthy old man, whom we found surrounded by his friends, and among them a party of the Amûr robbers, whom Mohammed chaffed considerably about their profession, asking them why they had not paid us a visit last night and saying that the Beg had been waiting to receive them, and would have made them a present of all his spare bullets. The men laughed and said they wished they had known. As it was, they had stolen a donkey and a gun from some passers by. The Amûr are a tribe and not a mere band of robbers, nor are they all at war with society; but they have no Sheykh, and each man sets up his tent where he likes and behaves as he likes. They are sometimes joined by deserters and escaped felons, but not in any great numbers; and the villages of Tudmur, Arak, and Sokhne send their camels and sheep to graze with the more respectable of them in the spring, and eat and drink with them when they meet. They are, all the same, a very low tribe indeed, and neglect even the virtue of hospitality to strangers. If you dismount at their tents, Mohammed says, they strip and rob you.

Wilfrid was anxious to visit a camp of these Amûr, of which the robbers we had made acquaintance with, said one was close by, so Mohammed, who seems to be on good terms with everybody in the country, offered to go with him. He had a reason, too, of his own for this, as he

wanted to see after a filly he has with the Amúr at grass, and to order some sheep for our entertainment at Tudmur. The two set off then together, while I, not caring to go so far out of the road, for I was tired, went on alone to overtake the camels. I found them in the plain of Tudmur, across which we marched steadily all the afternoon. About three o'clock I saw a horseman galloping from the hills to our right, but not quite in our direction, and guessing by the stride of the animal that it might be Hagar, I hastened on and found Wilfrid. He had had a most successful expedition. He and Mohammed had found the Amúr camp, and drunk coffee with the robbers. He says they are just like any other Arabs, only that their tents are the smallest he has seen. All of them had seemed on perfectly good terms with Mohammed, who had kissed the men whose tent they stopped at, as if he had been their Sheykh, and such indeed they had called him, either out of compliment, or, as Mohammed would make out, because of his prophetic descent. The filly was found to be well, and Salah, the Amúr in charge of her, had been ordered to bring her and three sheep to Tudmur the next day. Then they had galloped on to join us, Mohammed having long ago been left behind by Hagar, who did the six miles, for such we calculated the distance at, in a little over twenty minutes. She is a wonderful mare.

The ruins of Palmyra now began to show very

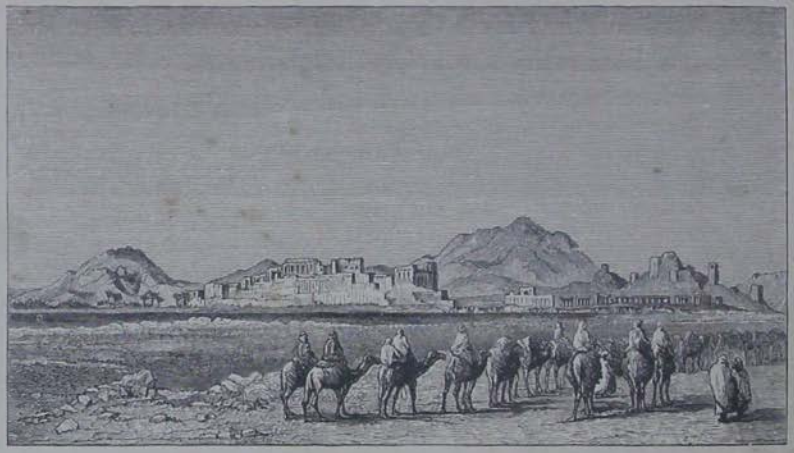
conspicuously under the hills in front of us. They are evidently of the same date as those at El Haddr, and the modern town occupies the palace just as it no doubt would at El Haddr, if El Haddr should be again inhabited. There are a few palm trees and some gardens beyond it and, still further on to the south, what seems to be a lake. But I leave descriptions for to-morrow. It was quite late before we arrived, and we have had great difficulty in persuading Mohammed to allow us to camp outside the village, instead of enjoying the hospitality of his father's house. But, by promising an early visit to-morrow, we have succeeded, I hope, in assuaging his wrath. We saw a cuckoo to-day sitting on the ground in the middle of the plain, and several swallows have come almost into our tent. Wilfrid, too, has heard a bird sing, he says, and begins to talk of England in a way I have not heard him do all the winter. This makes us more than ever anxious to get on with our mission, for as such we now look upon it, to the Ánazch, and then turn our steps homewards.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves."—Book of Job.

Politics in Tudmur—A blood-feud—Ali Bey the Circassian—Intrigues and counter-intrigues—A meeting in camp—The Mudir lectured on his duties—News of the Ánazeh.

March 30.—Mohammed's family consists first of all of his father Abdallah, Sheykh of the village of Tudmur, an old man of seventy, who, as is usual among the Arabs when they get infirm, gives in to his son in all things and leaves him practically at the head of the house. Then there are Mohammed's two wives, who of course occupy a separate apartment, and his mother and some sisters. He has only one child, a little girl of three, and is very downhearted at having no son, for it is a disgrace to be what they call childless in these countries, that is without male offspring. He talks of going next year in consequence to the Jôf and getting a third wife of his own people, the Beni Láam. He complains that there are very few "noble" families in Tudmur, and hardly any choice for him of a bride among them, for though common wives are to be had in plenty, and at the price of only ten pounds apiece as compared



PALMYRA.

[*Vol. II., p.* 42.

with the forty pounds payable for one of noble birth, he scorns to ally himself basely, and would not take a bourgeoise "even as a present." His mother was a Moáli, though not of the family of the Sheykhs, and he considers himself at least half a Bedouin. The "noble families" of Tudmur are those which trace their origin from the Nejd, having come in, as we say in England, "with the conquest," while the rest are mere Syrians, or, at best, Arabs from the Euphrates. Of the former Abdallah is Sheykh, and there is a second king in this Brentford, a Sheykh of the base-born. In old times, that is to say twenty years ago, before the Turks got possession of the town, the two classes were at constant feud and often at war. One of Mohammed's uncles was killed in a fray of this sort, and most of his ancestors seem to have met with violent deaths.*

Abdallah's house, to which we were taken early this morning, is just inside the gate of Tudmur, forming in fact almost a part of it, for several of the rooms, used as stables and for stowing away goods, are built into the masonry of the old tower. It commands a fine view of the inner town, which is to me all the more interesting from being filled with modern houses, as these from their meanness set off the ancient walls and temples to advantage. This inner town was in old times no doubt a fortified palace after the fashion of the building we

* Compare the state of things mentioned by Mr. Palgrave as existing in the Jóf, before its conquest by Ibn Rashid.

found at El Haddr, and both must be nearly of the same date. It is square, and the walls have at some more recent time been built up again and patched out of the older Roman materials, for the gateway is Saracenic. The effect of this medley, though architecturally a barbarism, is very picturesque and serves to mark the history of the place. Some of the blocks of stone are prodigious enough to move to admiration, even the Tudmuri, who will have it that they were put there by Súliman ibn Dáoud. Others on the contrary affirm that the English once had possession of the country, long before the days of Solomon, and were the real builders of the city. We have constantly been asked about this latter point of history, both here and in Mesopotamia, but are quite unable to account for the belief, which is certainly prevalent, of England's claim to all this part of Arabia. The belief would be strong enough to prepare the way for any new occupation or annexation, if such were ever projected.

While we were waiting for breakfast, which Mohammed was very busy preparing for us with his wives, his foxy-faced uncle Hassan appeared, having come in with the caravan from Deyr yesterday morning. We had seen nothing of him since leaving Bir, but somehow or another, probably while we were waiting in the neighbourhood of Sokhne, he had passed us on the road and had pushed on night and day to get home, for fear of

accidents. He was accompanied by the Mudir, whom we recognised as our old acquaintance Ali Bey, the Circassian brother-in-law of the Pasha of Aleppo. The Mudir seemed delighted to see us, as well he might be, for he is the only foreigner resident in Tudmur, and cannot speak more than a few words of Arabic. He poured out at once to us in a strange mixture of Arabic and Turkish, and in the ridiculously plaintive voice Circassians affect, his grief at having to reside in such a place, relating aloud in the most naïve way before a mixed audience of Tudmuri that there was not a soul fit for him to associate with in the town. As for occupation or employment there was nothing, nothing that a gentleman could concern himself with. His duties were a degradation, trying to collect taxes from people who would not pay, and attending to robbery cases without soldiers or police to support his authority. He was afraid of the people in the town, and of the people out of it. On one occasion he had been attacked by some Amúr in the desert and got his knuckles hurt in the tussle, but he was well mounted and had got away. If he had known what a forlorn place he was coming to he would never have left Aleppo. He had written to his sister, the Valy's wife, to complain of being treated thus, and to say that he would not stay another month in Tudmur for all the gold of Stamboul. The good-natured Tudmuri listened to this with rather contemptuous faces, but besought him to

have patience and trust in God. He did not however seem to see things in this light. His only companion and confidant was the mejlis or tax-gatherer, a Turk from Erzeroum, long-settled at Deyr, who wore Constantinople clothes and a fez, and looked very dirty. With him he every now and then relieved his mind in Turkish, or made him his interpreter and go-between with the Tudmuri. We do not like this man on account of his villainous face, though Mohammed assures us that he is a good fellow and a friend of his own.

When we had all sat talking thus in a friendly way for some little while, and finished our breakfast, Mohammed, inspired by some evil spirit, suddenly bethought him of a letter which Huseyn Pasha had entrusted him with for the Mudir, and, without consulting us on the prudence of delivering it, handed it to Ali Bey.* We saw that a mistake was being committed, but it was too late to interfere, and we could only watch the functionary's face as he read it and try and guess its contents. That they were not altogether to our advantage we were soon aware, for Ali Bey's manner suddenly became diplomatic, and he began to talk about the dangers of the desert, the disturbed state of the Bedouin tribes, ghazús, harámi and the rest, according to the official formula, and to suggest that

* The Arabs pronounce "Bey" as if it were written with a g. I have therefore spelt it with a y only when it occurs as the title of a Turkish official.

instead of staying encamped outside the town we should come with all our property to reside in Abdallah's house. In this proposal Mohammed was of course as our host bound to join, and then the foxy-faced Hassan chimed in with a suggestion that we should put ourselves entirely into his hands; he would show us everything we wanted to see, and make every arrangement for us we wished made, and see us safely on to Damascus. Our hearts sank at this new turn things seemed to be taking, and we dared say nothing about the Anazeh. We have refused, however, to move from where we are, saying that it will be quite time enough to do that when arrangements have been made for our further journey. At present we have the ruins to see, and also we expect a friend to join us from Aleppo, for we still cling to the hope that the Consul may yet come to our rescue.

Wilfrid, however, is very desponding about it, and nearly had a serious quarrel this afternoon with Mohammed. He was in an irritable mood, because Mohammed had joined with the Mudir in bothering us with this proposal of moving our camp; and it came to a crisis when a townsman, recommended by Mohammed as an intelligent blacksmith, drove a long nail into Hagar's foot, for her shoes wanted replacing. This made the cup of bitterness run over, and we left Abdallah's house in anger. Perhaps it was fortunate that the explosion occurred, for it led to an explanation, the result of which is

that Mohammed is to say distinctly to-morrow whether or not he will help us to go to Jedáan. At present he maintains that there is no news of the Anazeh at Tudmur, and thinks we had better go on to Damascus, unless we are prepared to wait on indefinitely here. We cannot make out whether this is a fact, or only the roundabout way Arabs employ in refusing to do a thing. The Arabs are always like the son in the parable who said he would go to the vineyard and went not. They never refuse point blank to perform a service.

As we were leaving the town, the Mudir and his attendant joined us and politely offered to show us over the ruins. We went with them as in duty bound, but we were far too pre-occupied to be greatly interested, though we made pretence of counting the columns and reading the inscriptions, *pour nous donner une contenance*. It was very hot and the Mudir soon got tired of walking about in the sun, so at last we have got rid of him, and are enjoying a few hours of quiet with the tent looped up, in full hot weather rig, and the comfortable sight of our camels and mares, making the most of their day's rest, in front of us.

March 31.—We had a gloomy consultation this morning, Wilfrid and I, about what was next to be done. We have come so far and achieved so much of what we originally put before ourselves as the object of our journey, that it seems impossible now we should abandon its completion. Yet luck has

turned against us, and a barrier of small difficulties, every day accumulating, bars the way to the last and most interesting scene of our adventures. It would be too hard, if, after getting up with so much care and so much success all the minor characters of our play, Hamlet himself should have to be left out. Yet we are threatened with the prospect of finishing our tour among the Bedouins without seeing Jedáan, indeed a lame and impotent conclusion.

The great plain, which stretches southwards before us to the horizon, contains the object of our hopes, but how are we to reach it? We could, indeed, start alone with sufficient water to last us for two or even three days, but we might be weeks wandering about before lighting upon the Ánazeh camp. If only we could get information of the direction it would be enough, and we would not stay a day longer here, but who is to tell us? It was agreed at last that Wilfrid should make a final effort with Mohammed, and then, if that failed, that I should remain here with the camp while he and Ghanim rode in on the two mares to Homs, the nearest town, about a hundred miles off, to get information about Mr. S., for Homs is a station of the Syrian telegraph, and perhaps find some agent of the Ánazeh, such as there are in all the great towns, who would assist us. They might be back in five days, and by that time, who knows but the Ánazeh or Mr. S. might have arrived. With this plan he went in to breakfast at Ábdallah's, while I

stayed, intending to have a morning's rest. But Wilfrid was no sooner gone, than the inhabitants of Tudmur, women as well as men, began to arrive at the camp, and made themselves so very disagreeable by their impertinence, that I have made up my mind on no account to be left here alone if Wilfrid goes to Homs, as he proposes. Fortunately Mohammed's mother and one of his wives happened to come out to pay me a visit, just as the whole party of my tormentors were beginning to swarm like bees into the tent, in spite of all Hánna could do to prevent them; and, thus reinforced, we managed to hold our own. The women told me that the people of this town are very ill-behaved, real "men of Belial," and that they themselves dare not go about alone. They brought me a present of lebben, and *helláwi*, a sort of sweetmeat, of which I am particularly fond.

At two o'clock, Wilfrid came back with the delightful news that everything is once more arranged. But how many times we have already been deceived! I count on nothing. By way of making better friends with Mohammed, Wilfrid yesterday sent him by Hánna a cloak and a pair of boots, just as he would have done to a Bedouin sheykh; and it appears that, though the gifts are of small value, the compliment has been much appreciated. On arriving at Abdallah's house, Wilfrid found a sort of family council going on, and a letter being read, which had just arrived by a messenger from Deyr.

They did not tell him at once what it was about, but by a little manœuvring, for it is always a difficult thing to manage a *tête-à-tête* among these sociable people, he got Mohammed alone, under pretext of going to see the Temple of the Sun. This stands inside the present town, and is used as a stable; and by good luck he and Mohammed were allowed to go away to look at it unattended by any of the busybodies who generally dog one's steps. When they had climbed to the top of the building and were out of all earshot, Wilfrid spoke seriously to Mohammed, and told him that we were resolved at all hazards to go to Jedáan, that we had left Deyr with no other purpose than to do so, and that if he, Mohammed, would not go with us there, we must look out for somebody else that would. He added, which was true, that we had taken a fancy to himself, and that if he would do us this service we should consider him as our brother. Lastly, he clinched the argument with the promise of an immense present, twenty mejidies (nearly 4*l.*) on the day that we should set foot in Jedáan's tent. I don't know which part of the argument convinced him, but Mohammed's manner, Wilfrid says, changed at once, and he promised that henceforth he was our servant, to do what we should tell him, and as a proof of his sincerity, informed Wilfrid that the Mudir's letter had contained instructions from Huseyn to send us on forthwith to Damascus. "But," he added, "Deyr is a long way off, and we

need not pay any attention now to the Pasha, while as for Ali Bey, he is a mere ass. All the Tudmurī laugh at him."

On their way back to Abdallah's house, Mohammed went on to explain that a letter had arrived this morning from Deyr, which relieved him of all anxiety to please Huseyn. Wilfrid naturally supposed that it had contained some disagreeable news, but the contrary is the case. It appears that there has been a long-standing rivalry between Mohammed's family and that of the bourgeois Sheykh, which of them should be acknowledged as Sheykh of Tudmur by the Government. Huseyn, in whose district Tudmur lies, had been appealed to by both, and a decision had just been given, not, as one would have supposed from Mohammed's readiness to act against the Pasha, against Abdallah, but in his favour. Mohammed seemed to think that, now the point was gained and nothing more could be expected, his obligation ceased; but this is the common rule among the Arabs, with whom gratitude is unknown, even as the expectation of future favours.

Abdallah was at once made confidant of the arrangement, and became very cordial with Wilfrid, whom he assured was as a son to him, and then one visitor after another, until I believe that the whole town knows of it, except Ali Bey. But Mohammed has undertaken that the thing shall be done, and says it does not matter who knows of it. The

most important bit of news, however, is that a man Mohammed sent some time ago to gather truffles in the Hamád, has come back with the news of the Sebáa being within three days' march, sixty or seventy miles, of Tudmur, coming slowly north. The man states that he saw young Meshúr ibn Mershid, the Gomussa Sheykh, the same who is said to have killed Ibn Shaalán, and who sent us the message of invitation when we were at Aleppo. It seems he is a friend of Mohammed's, who now is quite as eager as we are to be off, for Mohammed piques himself on his Bedouin connection, and his friendship with the Ánazeh sheykhs, though I believe he does not know Jedáan. We have only the Mudir now to settle with; and, now that we have the support of Mohammed's family, we need no longer hesitate to speak plainly of our intentions. This Wilfrid intends doing to-morrow.

It is tremendously hot, and the desert to the south looks like a simmering furnace; but the truffle hunter, who came from it with the news and who was here just now, has pointed us out a little tell on the far horizon, from which he says that you can see another, and that from that one you can see Ibn Mershid's camp, so that it no longer looks to us the absolutely trackless waste it did this morning.

April 1.—This morning Hánna came to me in tears, and announced his intention of leaving us. He has been ailing for some days with home-sickness, eats nothing, and I think feels the heat of the sun.

Moreover, yesterday after dinner he heard Wilfrid say, by way of accounting for Mr. S.'s non-appearance, that he thought the Consul must be dead; whereupon he rushed out of the tent howling, and then sat down on the ground, drew his cloak over his head, and refused to move or speak for the rest of the evening. Now, he has had terrible dreams about his children, whom he has made up his mind he shall never see again, and insists that he must go home at once. It is no use arguing with him, poor man, and we cannot be angry, for he has served us three months without a grumble, and put up with all sorts of hardships, and shown an amount of courage which could hardly have been expected of him, mere Christian of Aleppo that he is. He thinks, too, that we have been deluding him all along with false hopes of meeting the Consul, to whom he is attached, and now he says, "You tell me the Consul is dead! Boohoo! boohoo!"

What is really provoking is that Ferhán, the faithful Agheyl, who hitherto has done his duty, and more than his duty, without a word of complaint, has followed Hánna's suit, and now complains of being overworked, and of having been deceived into undertaking a journey he never bargained for. Neither he nor Hánna will go to the Hamád with us. They have had enough of the desert, and propose joining a caravan which is starting for Homs in a few days, and getting home as fast as they can. We hardly know what to do

or say to all this, beyond hoping that they will think it over, and suggesting how many valuable articles there will be for division among the servants when the journey is over and the camp broken up. Money they protest they do not care about. What good will it be to them if they are taken out to die in the wilderness? But I am sure the thought of the pots and pans he may inherit by persevering to the end will go far with Hánna, and Ferhán is too good a creature to desert us if Hánna stays. So I have given them till this evening to make up their minds.

Everything else is arranged. We went this morning in state to the Mudir's, and he received us with many apologies in the wretched hovel he inhabits. It is a ground-floor without flooring, windows, furniture, or anything to make it comfortable, and looks more like an empty stable than an official residence. However, Ali Bey is a well-bred man, and did the honours of his "serai" with the utmost politeness. A little comedy then began, the details of which had been arranged beforehand with Mohammed; and after the usual compliments and the usual cups of coffee, Wilfrid informed the Mudir that we were come to say goodbye, that we had just heard of the arrival of the Ánazeh in the neighbourhood, and were starting for their camp in the morning. Ali Bey in his broken Arabic began to expostulate, but Mohammed and the rest of the audience, who had been packed for the occasion,

would not allow him to go on, and overwhelmed him with a torrent of words. He had been unlucky enough to remark that the Bedouins were robbers, and this was the signal for loud expostulations from the crowd. "No, no," they called out, "the Ánazeh are quite another thing from the Amúr and the people you, Ali Bey, are accustomed to in the desert. The English Beg knows better than that." "But," argued the Mudir, "what does the Beg want with the Ánazeh that he must go off to them to-morrow. Why cannot he wait till they come here?" *Wilfrid:* "We are obliged to be back in our own country, and cannot afford to wait, and we cannot go without seeing the Ánazeh. In our own country it is the custom to travel for sight-seeing, just as in yours for trade. He who sees most gets most honour (akrám), and if I were to return to my friends and to tell them, 'I have seen Bagdad, and seen Aleppo, and seen the Shammar in Mesopotamia, and Deyr and Palmyra, but I did not see the Ánazeh,' they would laugh at me, and my journey would be a shame (aïb) to me." Now the word *aïb* is in constant use, and I may say abuse, among the Arabs, both in its literal sense and metaphorically; as we say in English, "it will be a shame if you don't give me sixpence;" and on this occasion it exactly suited the understandings of the audience, and they applauded the sentiment loudly. "You see," they echoed to Ali Bey, "it will bring shame on the Beg if he does not see

Jedáan." Still the Mudir made a feeble attempt at opposition, on the score of his having no soldiers to send with us as escort. But it was unanimously voted that soldiers would be quite out of place on an expedition of this sort. To arrive with an escort would in its turn bring "shame" on Jedáan, and that could not be thought of, for Jedáan is a power in Tudmur. As a last resort, the good man proposed to go himself with us, and we of course had to express great delight at the idea. But Hassan, who has been taken into confidence about the twenty mejidies, took the Mudir aside and told him in a whisper, that he really thought a man in his position had other business to attend to than that of running about after Frank travellers among the Bedouins, and Ali Bey was quite nonplussed; so, like other functionaries overpowered by popular clamour, he has washed his hands of anything that may happen, and has let us have our own way. Indeed, I do not see exactly how he could prevent us if he would, and we are to start to-morrow morning.*

The rest of the day we have been spending in looking at the ruins, which we are now better able to appreciate than we were yesterday, and in paying Abdallah a farewell visit, and in making a few purchases. Mohammed has made Wilfrid a present of

* We have since heard that Ali Bey did not hold out at his post more than ten days longer. He was seized with a panic and fled to Deyr.

a stone head he dug up here last year, a relic of no great value, but authentic. It has probably served to decorate an arch, after the fashion of the sculptures at El Haddr. Indeed, the architecture of both places is singularly alike. Abdallah tells me that no Franks have been to Tudmur for the last two years. Formerly some came every spring; but lately, for some reason he cannot explain, they have not appeared here. Still Palmyra must be too well known for any description of the ruins to be necessary. I asked him whether he regretted the old state of things before the Turkish occupation, and he told me "No, it was better now, for the taxes were levied more regularly. When the town was tributary to the Bedouins, one never knew when they would be satisfied. The feuds, too, in old times made life insecure." So even Turkish government seems to be better than none at all. The Mesrab, a section of the Resallin tribe of Sebáa Anazeh, used to levy tax on Tudmur, and exercise the right of escorting travellers there, but now all is changed, and the route from Damascus through Karieteyn is quite safe. The old man has been very kind to us all the time we have been here, and we have taken leave of him with regret.

* * * * *

A last attempt at delaying our journey has been made. We were riding out of the gate of Tudmur when Hassan met us, and with an air of importance laid his hand upon my mare's bridle. He begged

me to listen to what he had to say, and then informed me in a whisper that bad news had arrived from the desert. A young Tudmurí had just returned from a truffle-hunting expedition, and had been robbed and stripped by a party of Roála whom he had been unlucky enough to meet. Ibn Shaalán, the Roála Sheykh, was marching in force against the Sebáa, and it would be most dangerous for us to go out at this moment. I did not know what to make of this story, for Hassan is by way of being in our interests, and has even talked of going with us; but Wilfrid, as soon as he heard it, pronounced it to be nonsense, and told Hassan to bring the young man that we might question him.

We had not long to wait before Hassan made his appearance, followed by a rather stupid-looking youth. A very few questions sufficed to show that the tale had been got up for the occasion, and the answers were so absurd, that Mohammed from the very first lost control of himself and burst into a loud peal of laughter. The laughter was catching, and soon the whole circle of listeners had joined in it, including the youth himself, who, when somebody took hold of his very respectable *mashlakh* (cloak), asking if that was the cloak the Roála had robbed him of, no longer attempted to deny that the whole story was a romance. What Hassan's object was we could not discover, but he evidently wished to prevent our starting to-morrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

The odd trick and four by honours—A fast forty minutes—The Consul at last—We start for the Hamád—Song of the desert lark—A real ghazú—Looking for the Ánazeh—Jebel Ghoráb—We discover tents—Jedáan—Married for the fifteenth time and yet not happy—Blue blood in the desert—A discourse on horse-breeding—We are entrusted with a diplomatic mission to the Roála.

SONG OF THE DESERT LARK.

Sun - shine and sum - - - - - mer rain,
Win - ter and Spring a - gain
Still the years shall bring, But we die.

His torch, love, the sun,
Turns to the stor-my west, Like a fair dream be - gun,
Chan - ging to jest; Love, while our souls . . . .

April 2.—We neither of us slept much last night, for we were too much excited at the thought of starting, and too anxious lest, at the last moment, some accident should again delay us. About two o'clock in the morning, Wilfrid, who was roaming about, heard a sound of voices coming through the dark towards us from the town; and, presently afterwards, Ferhán challenged the talkers. Our hearts sank as we heard a reply in Turkish, and knew that they must be a party of soldiers, the very thing we most of all feared. Their arrival, too, reminded us disagreeably of what had happened at Bir; and it was in anything but a pleasant

voice that Wilfrid, gun in hand, asked them who they were and what they wanted. "*Yavash, yavash*," was the answer ("Gently, gently"). "We are soldiers from the Beg and we have a message for you." "What Beg? the Mudir?" "No, no, the Beg, the Consul Beg." He arrived last night at Arak, and has sent us on with a letter." Mr. S. was indeed come, and the joy in camp may be imagined, Hánna in his usual floods of tears embracing Ferhán, and informing all the world that he had never been able to believe that the Consul was really dead. We, too, were relieved from a great anxiety, only, as Wilfrid remarked, it was a little like winning the odd trick after a desperate fight, and then finding four by honours in one's partner's hand. Mr. S., it appears, had not left Aleppo till eight days ago, and then had travelled day and night on the chance of catching us up, and had at last broken down within fifteen miles of us at Arak. There we at once decided to go as fast as our mares would carry us, and, much to the disappointment of our followers, who were already calculating on another day's rest, we ordered the tents to be struck, and a march back to Arak at the first streak of dawn.

It was still nearly dark when we mounted, but we would not wait longer than for the rise of the morning star, and started at a gallop as soon as we had it for a guide. The zaptiehs on their tired horses made a show of accompanying us, declaring

it was impossible they should allow us to go alone. But Hagar had quite other ideas, and after the first two miles they dropped behind and were lost to sight. And now began the longest gallop I ever took in my life. It was fifteen miles to Arak, and we never drew rein till we got to the foot of the hill behind which the village stands. Wilfrid was resolved to try what Tamarisk could do, and rode her himself, leaving Hagar to me. For the first few miles my mare behaved very well, going on at her easy stride without any unnecessary hurry, and allowing Tamarisk to keep up more or less beside her, but after this, although she was not in the least excited, she would not be kept at any reasonable pace. She does not mind uneven ground full of jerboa holes, and went faster and faster, till soon Tamarisk and Wilfrid were as much out of the race as the soldiers were, and yet she would not be steadied. It was only when we came to the hills and very broken stony ground, fully twelve miles from where we had started, that I got a pull at her and at last stopped her. It was by this time daylight, and I got off and waited till Tamarisk appeared toiling along gamely behind. She had been what is called "ridden" every inch of the way, and yet she was not really tired, only Hagar's speed had been altogether too much for her. We were just forty-five minutes doing these twelve miles, and Wilfrid and I are in such excellent condition that we did not in the least feel our gallop.

The last two miles we travelled at a more sober pace, and the sun appeared as we rode in through the stone gateway of Arak.

We found Mr. S. in the act of mounting to join us, and for a moment, seeing two figures in white cloaks and yellow turbans riding up to him, he was quite mystified, for our costume is indeed a mongrel one, partly European, partly Bedouin, and partly fellah—the result of accident rather than of choice. It is not wise for Europeans to adopt a purely Bedouin dress in the desert, as by doing so they lose all the prestige of their nationality, while on the other hand hats and riding-habits, at all times unpractical, are impossible in hot weather. A Bedouin mashlakh worn over a light suit of European clothes is convenient, and has the advantage of being the usual dress of travellers in the desert, but the kefiye or handkerchief, generally added by them as a protection to the face, is not nearly so comfortable, and we have adopted the turban instead. Of all head-dresses this is the most practical in campaigning. It is equally good in hot and in cold weather, in wind and in rain. It protects the head from a blow as effectually as a helmet. It can be torn up to staunch wounds. It can be used as a rope or a girdle. And above all it is a pillow, the most necessary thing for a campaigner to carry with him. The turban, however, is the badge of the fellah in these regions, and does not command respect. Turkish officials wear

the fez only, while the Bedouins fasten their kefiyes with an aghaal or camel's hair rope. However, such is our costume, and it puzzled the Consul not a little.

I don't think I ever really enjoyed talking for talking's sake till this morning, but we have been so long without it. We had so much to tell and to hear, that for a couple of hours at least our tongues never stopped an instant. Mr. S. had been detained by the arrival of his successor at Aleppo, and so had failed us, but to make up had travelled day and night since, hoping to find us still at Deyr. At Treyf, he had learned from some zaptiehs that we had started from Tudmur, and leaving the valley had struck across the desert straight for this place. It had been a hard ride, without food or water for the beasts for many hours. At Arak the horse he rode could go no further, and the two mares he was bringing for us began to suffer from sore backs, so he had stopped short at this last stage of his journey, almost despairing of getting up with us after all. It is fortunate that his messenger arrived when he did, as three hours later we should have been off to the Hamád and out of all reckoning. Then there was political news to hear, the collapse of the Turks before Constantinople, an armistice, changes of ministry, and a thousand other things, to say nothing of a huge bundle of letters from England, the first we have received for nearly four months. These, although hungry for news, we have decided

nor to open now, nor till we are fairly started homewards with our faces towards the west. Good news is not necessary to make us happy here, and bad would only make the rest of our journey a torment. I think it is wiser so.

The new mares are the chestnut Saadeh Togán we bought at Deyr, a really splendid creature, who, except for a wrung wither, does not seem to have felt the severe journey she has just made in the least, and a white Hamdaniyeh Simri purchased for us by Mr. S. at Aleppo. This last mare was bred in the Nejd, and was given by Ibn Saoud five years ago to the Turkish governor of Mecca. He brought her to Aleppo, and gave her in turn to the chief Ulema there, who has since used her only as a brood mare, and to carry him once a day to and from the Mosque in a saddle of blue and gold. With the exception of this very moderate exercise, she had done no work for three years till eight days ago, and as she is also in foal it is not surprising if she is a little stiff. I am very pleased with her, however. She stands fourteen hands two inches, and has the most extraordinarily beautiful head ever seen, with the sweetest of tempers. I am delighted to have got such an exchange for Tamarisk, whose rough paces have been wearing me out.

At midday our camels, servants, and Mohammed arrived, Hánna running on before to kiss his patron's hand, and I need hardly say to water it

with his tears. The tents have been pitched in a wady below the village, and we have spent a delightful day showing to understanding eyes our property in camels, asses, and camp furniture, and feasting our eyes on the two lovely mares which are now to relieve the hard-worked Hagar and Tamarisk. A new donkey has been bought for Mr. S. for five pounds, and the zaptiehs have been dismissed. Mohammed has brought a long-legged Ánazeh with him who turned up this morning at Tudmur, and who is to take us to Jedáan to-morrow. Fortunately Arak is not much out of our road to him. The man, whose name is Jazzer, is as black as a negro, but his features are purely Semitic, and according to Mohammed his colour is only due to the sun; as to blood he is "asíl." Ghanim has been delighting us all with his music, but he and an Armenian Mr. S. has brought with him, have been fighting already over the new mares. Each of course wants to have the custody of them. There are three Christians now in our camp, for the Consul, besides the Armenian groom Simón, has brought a Christian servant with him, and these with Hánna have laid their heads together, as people of the same race or religion always do in the East when they find themselves in a majority, to bully Ghanim. They came this evening with a tale against Ghanim of tobacco stolen by him out of Wilfrid's bag, but we have taken his part, and reminded them that he is not our servant,

but Faris's, and begged them to treat him as in some measure our guest, and in any case to keep the peace. Poor Ghanim! I daresay his morals as to property are not quite pure, but he is a cheerful, willing boy, and a genius in his way. His rebáb is our chief pleasure in the evenings after dinner, and theirs too for that matter.

April 3.— Hánna has been entertaining the Consul's servant Jurji with a hospitality he must have learned from the Bedouins. Looking into the servants' tent last night I found Hánna lying on the bare ground without a rug to cover him, and Jurji snugly wrapped up in Hánna's mashlakh, and occupying the cotton quilt on which he usually sleeps. I asked Hánna what it meant, and whether Jurji was ill, but he answered simply, "Do not ask me to disturb him. He is my guest."

We started at half-past six, a merry party, for the Hamád, Jazzer the long-legged Ánazeh leading the way at a tremendous pace on foot. Our course lay south-east by south, with a saddle-backed tell on the horizon before us to mark the way. The morning was beautiful. A fresh breeze had sprung up in the night and cleared the weather, which had been sultry for the last few days, and we had the pleasure of riding our new mares. As we crossed the barren plain, some gazelles were seen, and then some bustards. This morning, too, for the first time, we heard the sweet but melancholy whistle of

the desert lark, a bird with such a curious song that I am surprised no fanciful traveller has ever thought it worth while to romance about it. It is a little brown bird with a speckled breast which sits generally on the top of a bush, and every now and then makes a short flight showing some light feathers in its wings, and then suddenly closes them and dives down to its perch. While it does this it sings a touching melody.

When we first heard it four years ago in the Sahara we were quite taken in, supposing it to be one of the Arabs with us, whistling to amuse himself. The quality of the tone is so like that of the human voice, that we had some trouble in tracing the song to its right owner. The birds generally sit in pairs, and it is only one of them which sings. The song at the head of this chapter was suggested by it, and by a certain air one of our camel men was singing the same day.

Our party now consists of Hánna, Ferhán and Ghanim, our own men; of Mr. S.'s two servants; Jazzer the Mehéd; Mohammed, and a certain cousin of his, Mohammed of Homs, bound on business to the Ánazeh. It is of him that we bought the donkey yesterday, and now he has laid out two pounds of its price in the purchase of another donkey, no larger than a Newfoundland dog on which he sometimes straddles, with his feet on the ground—it is difficult to call it riding. We had

stayed behind to eat our luncheon of bread and dates and let the camels go on, led by Jazzer, and now when we had finished our meal they were some mile or so ahead. It was just about noon, and the mirage in the middle of the day quickly swallows up even a caravan of camels on the horizon, or they get hidden in a dip of the plain, and ours were now out of sight. Wilfrid and I galloped on to keep up the line of communication, which it is very dangerous to lose in travelling in the desert, and it was well we did so, for by the time we sighted them the rest of our straggling party was in its turn lost to view. Wilfrid then sent me on alone to the caravan with instructions to stop it while he galloped back to collect the stragglers. He found them, with the Consul at their head, following each other quite unconsciously in a line at right angles to that of our route, and where they would have got to Heaven only knows. It was all that he could do to induce them to alter their course, which they still declared was that which the camels had taken. This little incident has made us cautious of keeping together, and has shown us the advantage of having at least one person well mounted with a caravan, as, had we all been riding donkeys and beasts of heavy burden, we should infallibly have now been scattered hopelessly over the plain.

After this, we went steadily on till sunset, when we stopped in a broad wady within sight of certain hills, from which Jazzer assures us we shall see the

Ánazeh tents to-morrow. We have come about thirty miles.

GHANIM'S SONG.

April 4.—Jazzer, for some reason unexplained, altered his course this morning, and started off south-east; and, after passing the tell we had seen yesterday, a line of low hills came in sight, or as they turned out afterwards, of cliffs, the edge of an upper table land. Towards this we advanced obliquely, keeping a good look-out for tents, which we expected to find in every hollow,—for a party of Sleb were known to be in the neighbourhood. About nine o'clock Wilfrid thought he saw two men, peeping over a bit of broken ground about a mile off to our right, and galloped up to them for news, leaving me with Mr. S., who made me anxious by saying that it was very imprudent to ride up in this way to unknown people by oneself, but by this time Wilfrid was far away and unconscious of criticism. Besides, I knew he was well armed and mounted, and would run no unnecessary risk. Mohammed too had started off to support him as soon as he saw what was going on.

As it turned out, it was very lucky Wilfrid went to them, for in about half-an-hour he returned at full speed to tell us we were going the wrong way, that the Ánazeh had moved away from the

camps where Jazzer had left them, and that we must strike due south. On riding up he had found himself suddenly in the presence of ten men hidden in a small wady, with three dromedaries kneeling down so as to be out of sight, and armed with spears, while one of them had a matchlock and another a pistol. Four of the party had come forward, holding their spears in front of them in rather a menacing attitude; but without dismounting, and keeping well out of reach, he had asked them who they were, and what they were doing. They turned out to be a party out on a ghazú, but whether from the Fedáan or the Roála is still very doubtful. They said they were from the former, and that they were going to steal camels from the latter, but the contrary is just as likely. They seemed good-humoured fellows, and conversed in the usual off-hand Bedouin way, informing Wilfrid that Jedáan was close by, just over the brow of the hills I spoke of, and saying we were in the wrong road. Then Mohammed had come up and cross-questioned them, and they had all sat down very amicably, Wilfrid even giving them his rifle to look at. This, which is a Winchester with fourteen cartridges, is a never-failing source of delight to the Bedouins. So, wishing them good luck on their expedition and a happy return, Wilfrid and Mohammed had departed. The men's last words were that Jedáan and Mohammed Duki and Ibn Mershid, and Ibn Haddal were all together just beyond the hill, "*jerîb*,

jerîb," (close by, close by). With this comfortable news we accordingly put our camels' heads towards the south.

The plain now began to ascend, and, by following the line of a long winding wady, we reached the crest of the hills, and found them, as I said, to be only the broken edge of an upper plateau. There, far and wide before us, the level plain stretched out, unbroken except by one three-peaked hill, higher than any we had yet seen, and recognised by Jazzer as Jebel Ghoráb or "Raven's Hill," about ten miles away to the south. Of tents or camels nothing at all was to be seen.

The situation required some speediness of decision, as the information given us by the ghazú party might be false, and we were advancing into a thirsty land with a very limited supply of water. Jazzer seemed in doubt whether to continue in the new direction or to revert to the old one; and the rest of the party were of course without knowledge of the country, or ability to form an opinion. Wilfrid, however, decided that the hill was our best chance. It would serve at least as a look-out from which we might hope to spy out something, and towards it we steered. He and Mohammed rode on in front, the rest of the party keeping them just in sight. As we came near the hill, which is of limestone and capped with three peaks, I could see Wilfrid and Mohammed like specks upon the top of it. They seemed to be waving their cloaks but I could not

see more, it was too far away. They came down at last with melancholy faces, put on for the occasion, for they had good news to tell. They had gone to all three peaks in succession, and from the top of the last, the furthest south, they had made out tents, many miles away, indeed, yet certainly tents and certainly the Ánazeh, for the black spots seen covered an immense space from east to west, the nearest lying due south of us. So, in spite of the heat, which was very great, and of the blank look of the land we were entering, we went on in high spirits.

In a couple of hours we came upon camels grazing, and learned from the men with them that they were the property of the Mehéd, Jedáan's own tribe, and that we should soon come to their tents. We were the first people from the outside world, I suppose, that they had seen this spring, yet they expressed no curiosity or interest in our proceedings, and seemed to take our arrival as the most ordinary thing in the world. Of interference with us or our affairs there was no sign, and when we asked the way to Jedáan's tent they answered as simply and as civilly as any labourers would in England in pointing out the road to the Squire's house. We passed thus through immense herds of camels for another hour, and then came upon tents; and so went on and on, till, at the extreme end of the camp, we found the Sheykh's tent, set in the middle of a patch of purple stock, with several mares and colts grazing round it. The first person who came out to meet

us was our old acquaintance Ali the Mehéd, whom we had plotted with at Deyr, and whose failure to meet us at the trysting place outside had been the cause of all our difficulties. He apologised very handsomely for having left us in the lurch, and explained that the Pasha had got wind of our arrangement, and had threatened to hang him, if he did not go about his business at once.

He told us Jedáan was in the tent and was expecting us; and presently a middle-aged man, rather shabbily-dressed and rather ill-mounted on an iron grey mare, rode up to us and bade us welcome. There was nothing in his manner, features, or appearance to proclaim him a man of note. His face was plain and undistinguished, his address neither very dignified nor very engaging, his smile a singularly cold one, — only his eyes were remarkable by a certain glitter they had, and the projection of the eyebrows over them. He returned our greeting gravely, and rode almost in silence with us to the tent. This was Jedáan, the great captain of the Ánazeh, honoured by them with the title of Emir el Arab. The first words he uttered, after the usual compliments had been exchanged, were a question as to the breeding of my mare, Sherífa, whose extraordinarily beautiful head seems to attract all eyes to her. This struck us as rather rude, and I had expected, considering their old alliance and brotherhood, a far greater demonstration of pleasure by him towards the Consul. On the whole we are

not favourably impressed by this great man, and suspect that the position he has achieved in the desert has turned his head.

Jedáan is a parvenu, and owes all his position to his own merit as a man of action and a politician. He began life as a poor man of no very distinguished family in the Mehéd tribe, itself not one of the most powerful tribes among the Ánazeh. Abd-ul-Kerim, his friend as a boy and afterwards his enemy, helped him on at the outset, and then his great courage and brilliant horsemanship brought him into the notice of his own people, who being great warriors, elected him their Sheykh. Still for many years he was only Sheykh of the Fedáan, and it was not till Suliman-ibn-Mershid's death left the Sebáa like sheep without a shepherd, that he was recognised as military leader of the united tribes. The Sebáa elected him as their Akíd, and he has since had it all his own way with this section of the Ánazeh. In appearance, I have said, he is not prepossessing, his features are coarse, and his manner wants that well bred finish, which distinguishes the members of families really "asíl." There is still a trace of the old submissive manner of the poor man, under the dignity of the Sheykh. His smile seems forced, and his manner hesitating and abrupt, as if he was not quite sure of his position. If it was not for his eyes he would be unrecognisable as a great man, but these are like a hawk's, piercing, fierce, and cold.

We have sent him his mashlakh and boots, and

Hánna tells us that when he brought them to the tent Jedáan bade him hide them, lest the others should see what we had given, and he be obliged to part with some of them. How different to Faris, who gave all away with a perfectly open hand! When he came to see us afterwards in our own tent, he said little and went away suddenly. Either he is pre-occupied, or he has had his head turned by his fortune,—one has known people in Europe quite unbearable for some months after succeeding to a fortune, or a title, or simply after marriage. Dinner was given us in our own tent, lamb and kemeyes, lebben and dates. The water is very muddy but quite sweet. It comes from some pools of rain-water in the neighbourhood, and rain-water is always good.

In the evening, we received visits from Túrki Jedáan's only son, a loutish fellow unworthy of his father's reputation, and from a certain Faris-ibn-Meziad, Sheykh of the Mesénneh, whose blood, Mohammed tells us, is the bluest in all Arabia. Then, before going to bed, we handed Mohammed the twenty mejidies we had promised should be his the day we saw Jedáan. "He is not worth it," we said, "after all; but never mind."

April 5.—The Ánazeh are on their way north, or rather north-west, and never stay more than a couple of nights in the same place, so this morning the tents were struck, Jedáan waiting out of compliment to us to do so till ours were down. By a couple of hours after sunrise everybody was on the march,

and a fine sight it was. The Mehéd camp covers several miles of ground, and the tents are scattered about, in groups of ten or a dozen, at intervals of at least a quarter of a mile, so that it is impossible to make even a guess at the whole number; but the line of camels extended as far as we could see on either side of us, and the tribe is said to reckon a thousand tents. Jedáan of course rode with us, and, as it was the first day of our visit, a fantasia was performed in our honour, much in the same fashion as that to which Faris had treated us, but done with less spirit. There seems to be none of that personal affection for Jedáan among his followers that we found among the Shammar for their Sheykh, and Jedáan himself is moody and pre-occupied. He went through his own part of the performance more as a duty than a pleasure, and it was soon over. I am glad, however, to have seen him ride in it, as he is the most celebrated horseman of the desert, and, mounted as he was to-day on his big horse, he certainly gives one a fine idea of Bedouin prowess. His seat on horseback is admirable, a more natural one to European eyes than that of most Arabs, who generally sit crouched on the very shoulders of their mares. Jedáan on the contrary sits well back, and his legs hang easily from the knee, while his hand seems to be very perfect. He was riding a horse celebrated in the tribe, a powerful four year old of at least fifteen hands, of which we had already heard, and showed it off admirably, but I was disappointed

in the animal. He is a bay Kehîlan Akhrás with three white feet (*muttlakh esh shimál*) and a great splotch of white down the nose. He has a fine sloping shoulder and powerful quarters, but the neck is heavy and the hocks set too high. A charger, in fact, more than a racer.

Jedáan's son Turki joined clumsily in the manœuvres, but it is evident he is no horseman, and, from some hints thrown out by the people about him, I fancy he is half-witted. A boor he certainly is. Jedáan's secretary, Mehemet Aázil, a native of Orfa, also rode with us, and a little pale-faced, grey-eyed man whom the Consul recognised as an old acquaintance. He is the Ulema Abd-er-Rahman Attar, a doctor of divinity from Aleppo, and a man of considerable influence among the Anazeh, not on account of his clerical profession, but from the fact that his father was a horse-dealer and had had commercial relations with them. He seems to be here on some sort of diplomatic mission, connected with the quarrels of the tribes. The Consul tells us that this Abd-er-Rahman is really a learned man both in divinity and law, and an honourable man to boot; so that, although he talks Turkish, which somehow grates upon my ears, and has a wretched town complexion, we are making friends with him. He seems a mine of information about desert history and politics.

The fantasia over, Jedáan got down from his horse, and mounted the same scrubby filly he met

us on yesterday, and saying that he had business to transact elsewhere, put us under his son's escort and rode away to the left. There is evidently something brewing, but whether peace or war we cannot quite make out. I thought the retainers seemed more at their ease when the Sheykh was gone. A little attempt at sport was made, a bustard hawked and a fox coursed; but the Bedouins here seem to care little about such things, being in this strangely different from their relations in the Sahara. The hawk was a very large one, larger than the peregrine, and well under command, for having missed his quarry he came back at once to his master's call. It is very pretty to see these hawks, perched two together on the croup of their master's mare, or on his wife's hówda, and keeping their balance with wings stretched out. The greyhounds while on the march seemed perpetually at work coursing something or other, fox, hare, or gazelle, for the long line of camels acting as beaters puts up everything before it for miles. The dogs are small, but show great breeding, most of them being of the so-called Persian variety, with long silky ears and tails. The march was irregularly conducted. A group of horsemen rode first, but followed no particular line, going first in one direction and then in another, either from the inability we have noticed in the Bedouins to keep a straight line, or possibly looking for pasturage and camping-ground. Every mile or so they dismounted to talk and wait for the camels, which came slowly

but surely on behind, feeding as they went. Every time we thought they intended to encamp, but they still went on, and it was not till about one o'clock that Turki finally stuck his spear in the ground and told us the tents were to be pitched there. The place chosen is a likely spot enough, a deep wady, Wady-el-Helbe, some forty feet below the level of the plain, and one vast bed of grass and flowers. We have been turning round Jebel Ghoráb all day, and it is still in sight five or six miles off to the north-north-east. It is very hot, and we are sitting in the sun waiting for the camels to come up with the tents; but my mare is kind enough to let me make use of her shadow, to a certain extent, while I write. She is too gentle to move away.

Evening.—Jedáan's pre-occupied manner is explained. He was married two days ago and for the fifteenth time! He has confided his woes to Mr. S., the most prominent of them being the foolishness of his son, who really is it seems half-witted. Turki is now twenty-four years old, and is of no use either in peace or war, being an idle, stupid lout, who cannot even ride. This is Jedáan's secret misery and the cause of all his marriages, for it is in the hope of a more worthy heir that he has married over and over again, and now at the age of fifty-five has just taken to himself a fifteenth wife. He came to the Consul this evening with an apology —"*Amán, Amán,*" he said, ("Peace, peace, forgive me,") and told his troubles. He is also worried and

anxious about the Roála war, which, as Akíd of the Sebáa, he is obliged to carry on, against his private wishes and his better judgment, and which it seems is not going on so satisfactorily as might be wished. He married his daughter Turkýa last year to Ibn Shaalán, the Roála Sheykh, and although she has quarreled with her husband he seems to consider Sotamm as a relation. He has no blood feud or private quarrel with any of the Roála. The cause of his leaving us to-day was the marriage feast, which it is customary for the bride's father to give to the bridegroom on the third day after the wedding. A young camel is then killed, and all the relations are invited. Jedáan's new father-in-law belongs to the Sirhán, a small Ánazeh tribe, and is staying with Ibn Keshish's family, Sheykh of the Khryssa. The bride is said to be pretty, though thirty years of age and quite an old maid for an Arab girl. The reason of her being so long unmarried is singular. It appears that according to desert law a girl may be claimed in marriage by her first cousin, and even kept waiting year after year until he chooses to marry her or set her free; and so it has happened in this case. But, Jedáan being a powerful personage, the girl's father has been persuaded to set aside the cousin's right. Jedáan's mother is also a Sirhán, and it was she who really made the match; she is very anxious her son should have a worthy heir, and she left him no peace until she got his consent to her plan. Still, there seems to be

some doubt as to whether the marriage is a legal one.

As soon as our camels had arrived at the new halting-place, and the tents had been pitched, we went off in search of water for our mares, leaving the lout Turki sprawling in our tent. The mares had had none yesterday, and were suffering from want of it in the hot sun. Jedáan's people were equally without water, but they were either too lazy to fetch it or indifferent about their beasts' comfort; and, though they talked vaguely of water being close by, they made no move towards it. So we went away by ourselves with Mohammed in the direction pointed out to us, and about three miles off found a large pool of rain-water, beyond which another Bedouin camp was established. The mares, poor things, were very glad to get their noses into the muddy water, and we thought would never stop drinking. My Nejdean mare, however, is a very curious drinker. She only puts the tips of her lips to the water and takes several minutes sipping the amount of a bucket full, while Hagar thrusts her whole muzzle in and drinks voraciously.

The tents proved to belong to the Moáyaja, one of the Sebáa tribes, and, when the mares were satisfied, we went on to pay a visit to their Sheykh. They were only just arrived, and the Sheykh's tent was not yet pitched, but he received us in that of his uncle Ali. Ferhán-ibn-Hedéb is a young man of two or three and twenty, and has the most

distinguished manners of any of the Bedouins we have met, Faris only excepted. He is short in stature, but very slight and graceful, with exceedingly small hands and feet, and a refined, almost melancholy, countenance of dark olive hue. He was very poorly dressed, but there was something in his air which pointed him out to us at once as a man of rank and birth. His manner to ourselves was a type of good breeding—quiet, frank, and unobtrusive, and full of kind attentions. He apologised simply, but with dignity, for the poor reception he was able to give us. His tribe was the one which had suffered most from the Róala war, for, at the very outset, and before hostilities had actually been declared, they had been plundered by the Turkish soldiers whom Ibn Shaalán had got to help him. These had left the Moáyaja without so much as a tent over their heads, and the wretched awnings under which they are now camped have been given them in charity by the other Sebáa tribes. All their cooking pots and pans, things hereditary in a Sheykh's tent, were gone, and it was all they could do to muster a copper jug to make us coffee in. They had no bread, only dates and truffles; but, as Ferhán said, "the kemeyes are our bread just now, and better than the bread of towns."

Of the war he naturally spoke with some bitterness, and of the treacherous attack made upon his people by Ibn Shaalán and the Turkish troops. Their camp had been surrounded while stopping in

the neighbourhood of Hama, and they had only just managed to escape with most of their mares and camels. The war must now go on till they had got back what had thus been lost. "And Jedáan," we asked, "what does he wish in the matter?" "War of course," answered Ferhán. "But in his heart?" "Ah, I have not seen his heart." The fact is, they all know that Jedáan is only half-hearted in carrying on the war. We like these Moáyaja particularly. They are very different from Jedáan's people, who are rough and uncivil. These are exceedingly well-mannered. Ferhán himself reminds us of the very best type of Spaniard, a *grande cubierto*. His blood, indeed, is considered the best among the Sebáa, and Mohammed tells us that, with Ibn Mershid's, it ranks next to that of the five great families of absolute nobility, the Ibn Meziad of the Hesénneh, the Ibn-el-Hemásdi of the Ibn Haddal, the Ibn Jendal and the Tayár of the Roála, and the Ibn Smeyr of the Welled Ali. He told us this as we were riding to-day, and I asked Ferhán if it was correct, and in what this absolute nobility consisted. He told us it was so, and that the five families thus distinguished had at *all* times killed a lamb for their guests. "The rest of us have only *learned* to do so." *

Ali's tent was partly occupied by a filly and a bay foal, the latter not a week old and very en-

* Ibn Shaalán's is only a "noblesse d'épée" of some half-dozen generations, while Jedáan is a parvenu.

gaging. It was tied up, as the custom is, by a rope round the neck, while its mother was away grazing, and neighed continually. It was very tame, however, and let me stroke it, and sniffed at my pockets, as if it knew that there might be some sugar there. Ali showed us his mare, (not the foal's mother,) a dark chestnut, Abeyeh Sherrak, a strong but rather plain animal, which would pass as a "handsome cob" in England. Ferhán's horse pleased us better, a three-year-old, Hadban Mshétib, which I preferred infinitely to Jedáan's Kehîlan Akhras.

The Ibn Hedéb were very anxious to retain us with them, but we could not risk offending Jedáan, by leaving him without saying goodbye; so we have promised to come again, and rode home to the Wady-el-Helbe in a storm of hail and rain.

April 6.—Lightning in the night and a threatening of rain. Jedáan came to our tent the first thing this morning, and talked more openly than he has yet done; but I do not like him. He seems a selfish man, entirely occupied with his own schemes and ambitions, and lets one see many a little meanness, which better breeding would have concealed. The Sebáa, I fancy, do not *like* him either; but they *need* him, for since Suliman-ibn-Mershid's death they are without a leader, while Jedáan has military genius. His heart, all the same, is not in the war, and it is a curious trait of manners that last winter, while the war was at its height, Jedáan, the leader of the Sebáa, should have

married his daughter to Ibn Shaalán, the leader of the Roála. Whether he did this with a political motive I cannot make out, nor do I quite understand his present feelings about the marriage. It turned out badly, and Jedáan's daughter came back two or three months ago from her husband, saying that she could not get on with him; and yet Jedáan talks of Ibn Shaalán as having claims on him as his son-in-law. Of the origin of the war he gave us some account. It appears that from time immemorial the Sebáa have occupied the plains of Homs and Hama as their summer pasturage, paying a sort of rent to the Turkish Government for this and the right of trading, amounting to six hundred camels yearly. Last May, however, the Roála, who have increased and multiplied greatly of late years, came forward with an offer of fifteen hundred camels, and backed it with a present of fifty mares, to be distributed among the Government officials of Damascus, Homs, and Hama; and thus secure of support, marched in before the Sebáa's arrival, and took possession. The Sebáa, however, came, and a battle ensued, in which the Roála were worsted, whereupon Sotamm-ibn-Shaalán applied to the Turks for help; and, by subsidising the pasha, obtained from him a body of Turkish infantry to support his people. These came suddenly upon the Gomussa and Moáyaja, whom they found isolated, and surrounded them. The Sebáa do not seem to have behaved very heroically, for they made no

resistance to the soldiers; and allowed themselves to be pillaged. The troops sacked all the Moáyaja camp, captured fifty mares, and drove off a hundred and eighty camels, besides three thousand sheep. Since then a war of reprisals has been carried on, but Jedáan assures us that not more than fifty men have been killed on either side.

Jedáan's face improves when he is excited, for then his eyes, which are really fine, light up surprisingly. I proposed to take his portrait, and he was much flattered at the idea, and sat with extraordinary patience for nearly an hour, and then called for his secretary, who wrote Jedáan's name for us underneath the drawing, adding "*Emir el Arab*," his new title in the desert, with which he is as pleased as people are with theirs in England. The portrait hardly did him justice, for it gave the ruggedness of his features, without their occasional fire. I was more successful in a sketch I made of his daughter Turkýa, a pretty and interesting woman, whom I presently afterwards made acquaintance with.

As soon as Jedáan went away, I paid a visit to the harém, and found there in the place of honour Jedáan's first wife, Hazzna, the mother of his three children. The new wife has a tent of her own. Hazzna was very gracious, doing the honours of her household, and of course making me sit in her place. She has greater remains of good looks than is usual in a Bedouin mother of grown-up

children, so that when, pointing to Turki, who sat in the tent fondling a baby, she informed me that he was her son, I could truly say I was surprised. Her countenance is agreeable, her manner, though amiable, was rather embarrassed, perhaps because she wore a gorgeous Bagdad *abba* of purple and gold interwoven, a piece of finery to which she seemed unaccustomed, and the only instance I have seen among Bedouin ladies of any attempt at smart clothes. I asked her about the wife of Ibn Shaalán, on which she turned to a young girl sitting on her left with a child in her arms and said, "This is Turkýa." I looked and saw a graceful creature with a most attractive face, though curiously like Jedáan. Turkýa has the same strangely brilliant eyes, but without her father's hawklike expression; and her face, though the features resemble his and are far from regular, is really pretty. I made friends with her at once, and asked her to sit for her portrait. While she sat, one of Turki's wives (he has three, and several small children) squatted by her giggling, and trying to make her laugh, but she behaved very well. Mohammed Aázil, the secretary, was rather tiresome, with his incessant flow of conversation, and indeed so were the assembled company, who took a great interest in my drawing, continually interrupting me with their observations. Their remarks, however, were all of encouragement and approval, and it always strikes me as showing a natural superiority of in-

telligence in Arabs over Europeans, that the former at once understand the merest indication of a sketch or map, which would be meaningless to the uneducated among the latter.

I found that Turkýa's child, a daughter nearly four years old, was by a former marriage; her first husband, a brother of her father's, died mad about three years ago. It seems that she was so much attached to him that she even now laments his death, and that she always disliked her second marriage, and seized the first pretext for escaping from it. She now says she cannot go back to Sotamm-ibn-Shaalán, and wants to remain with her own family. Jedáan has another daughter, still prettier than Turkýa, a lovely little girl of eleven, named Ariffa. We saw her yesterday, when Faris-ibn-Meziad, Sheykh of the Hesénneh, who is here on a visit, brought her to our tent to "*furraj*" ("gaze") at us.

The half-witted Turki sat silent all the while I was drawing, but when I had finished and was going away, he brought out three or four revolvers of English and American make to show me. He seemed to have a particular fancy for handling these firearms, pointing them recklessly all round, to the terror of men, women, and children in the tent, until the secretary took them away from him. He then made me a little set speech, from which it appeared that he was not such a fool after all, for he had evidently shown me these revolvers only in order to lead up to the request that I would give

him my own. He wanted it for his mother, he said, but she sat by without joining in his entreaties, and I only replied that I could not spare it, and taking leave of Hazzna and Turkýa returned to our tent. When I got back I found that Wilfrid had decided on going on to Ferhán's camp this afternoon. Hánna has been complaining of the rudeness of the people here, whom he can no longer keep out of the servants' tent, and who make his life a burden to him. Yesterday, he declares, Turki, with half a dozen of his friends, lay sprawling all day long on our carpets and cushions, and when spoken to by Hánna, called him a "pig" and an "infidel." This, very likely, is an exaggeration, but Wilfrid thinks we shall be more comfortable with the Sebáa, who are well-bred people. Jedáan's men have a bad reputation in the desert for everything except fighting. We have consequently come back to the pool where we were yesterday, and where we find our friend Ferhán delighted to see us again. It is certainly a great pleasure to be among such polite pleasant people as these Moáyaja are.

Jedáan was very tiresome at parting, with an unreasonable request for a revolver, which we could not spare him, and he showed, we thought, a great want of dignity in the matter. On the whole, we were anything but sorry to bid him goodbye. We were hardly, however, out of sight of the Fedáan camp before Abd-er-Rahman, the learned man from Aleppo, overtook us, and requested permission to

travel with us. He then explained to Mr. S. in Turkish, that he had a matter of great importance to communicate to us, and proceeded to disclose a negotiation, with which he had been entrusted by Jedáan. I cannot understand why Jedáan should have chosen this roundabout way of letting us know what he wanted, especially when he must have known we should be delighted to grant his request. It appears, then, that Jedáan was struck by some remarks I made this morning on the folly of letting a petty quarrel for pasturage divide the strength of the Anazeh, when the Bedouins had in face of them so powerful an enemy as the Turks, and that it had occurred to him I might be willing to undertake a diplomatic mission to the Roála camp, which lies on our way to Damascus, and endeavour to bring about peace between the tribes. A council is to be called of all the Sheykhs of the Sebáa and of their allies, and the terms of peace discussed, with which I am to go to the Roála. Jedáan thinks that most of them really desire to see the war finished, and that if some arrangement can be come at with Ibn Shaalán about the pasturage of Hama, bygone quarrels may be forgotten. Of course I am delighted to think that I can possibly be of use in such a negotiation, which really it would be worth while to succeed in. Abd-er-Rahman will go with us as second plenipotentiary to explain things better than I can, and we all intend to do our best to make the mission successful.

As a first step we have sounded Ferhán about his feelings in the matter, and he has explained that, although it is impossible for him to speak openly with his people of making peace, yet he feels sure that they are tired of the war, and he himself is quite willing to forget his losses in it. We like Ferhán immensely. He is so straightforward and sensible, and shows high-minded ideas on every subject we have discussed. We have given him a cloak and boots, both of which articles, poor fellow, he is much in want of, and, unlike the rest who have received these presents from us, he has put them on himself, understanding that this pleases us. The tribe is quite ruined, and the Sheykh's mother has had to borrow a cooking-pot of Hánna to boil the lamb in for our dinner. Ferhán is not married, but lives with his mother and another widow of his father's, a pretty quiet woman, who has a child two years old, Ferhan's half-brother. His father Majún died two years ago.

Several Arabs of the Gomussa have been here talking principally about horses, for they are the great breeders of horses in the desert. Amongst others they spoke of a wonderful mare, a Meleyha, which they said a certain European had once offered 600*l.* for, when they were in their summer quarters near Aleppo; but the manner of his dealing seems to have impressed them with the idea that he was out of his mind, and they would not sell the mare. They made very merry over this. We asked them

the usual question about the horses of Nejd, and the existence of separate breeds there, and they gave the usual answers. We also asked whether they had ever heard of a mixture of blood having been effected with English or other horses, as some people pretend has been the case with the Anazeh stock. At first they could not understand our question, but when they did they were rather indignant. "All that is a lie," they said, "and absurd. Our horses are the same as those of our forefathers, before they came from Nejd, and the same as those of the tribes which have remained there." None of them have ever seen or heard of an English horse, which would of course be a *kadish* (mongrel). All horses but their own were *kadishes*, not worth talking about. Abd-er-Rahman, too, whose father was a horse-dealer, laughed at the notion of a Bedouin ever allowing his mares to look at an European horse, and said he had never heard of any tradition of the kind we mentioned. The thing would be an impossibility. So I should think. The only European horses ever brought to the desert were some of Mr. S.'s, about twenty years ago, and they proved an entire failure. Though of the best blood in England, the Arabs would have nothing to say to them.

While we were eating our dinner, a very good one of fried mutton, cakes, and fresh butter, a beautiful little gazelle was brought for us to look at. It was a fawn of only a few days old, and had

been caught yesterday while the tribe was on the march. It is the prettiest little thing imaginable, no bigger than a hare, all legs and ears, and great black wistful eyes. Some children had it, tied by the legs so that it could not run fast, and were wearing its life away by their rough play. I took it on to my lap, and it went at once to sleep. Poor thing, they have given it to a goat to bring up ; but I am sure it can never live. I wish I could take it with me.

CHAPTER XX.

"Alarums, excursions, then a retreat."—SHAKESPEARE.

Ferhán ibn Hedéb—The Gomussa and their mares—Mohammed Duki—A lawsuit in the desert—A tribe of Gazelle hunters—Beteyen's mare—The Sebáa are attacked by the Roála—A panic and a retreat—Our new brother, Meshúr ibn Mershid—Scarcity of water—We leave the Ánazeh camp and make a forced march to Bir Sukr.

Sunday, April 7.—The name of the pool by which we are encamped, or rather of the pools, for there is a succession of them, is Khábra el Mashkúk. It lies within sight of the Tell el Ghoráb, ten miles perhaps due south of it, and about sixty south-east of Tudmur. It covers some few acres, but is very shallow, being dependent for its existence as a pool solely on the winter rains. According to all accounts, however, there is a series of them running east and west, and forming a convenient line of encampments in the direction of Damascus. It will be along these that we hope to go on now to the Roála, who are not more than a hundred miles away, if report speaks true. They tell us we shall find encampments of the Sleb on our road, and learn from them exactly where the Roála are.

A COUNCIL OF WAR.

[Vol. II., p. 98.

Ferhán spent the morning with us talking, and answering the many questions we bored him with, most agreeably. It was pleasant, too, to see the way in which he exerted his authority over his people in keeping them from boring us. Not that they did anything which was impolite, but the right of gazing is one which is liable at all times to abuse in a Bedouin camp; and, when the youths and boys edged in too closely round our tent, he would send them about their business with a good-humoured word or two which they did not venture to disregard. His manner to them was exactly that of an elder brother keeping order in an unruly household. We should have liked to stay longer with Ferhán than this one night, but, now that our diplomatic mission is seriously decided on, we shall have to visit one or two more of the principal sheykhs, and so about ten o'clock we struck our tents, intending to go on to the Gomussa, who were close by. Ferhán, as we wished him goodbye, seemed really sorry to part with us, and made us promise, not unwillingly, that, if ever we come again into his neighbourhood, we will make his tent our home. I hardly know whether it is their misfortunes and present poverty which make them so, but these Moáyaja and their sheykh are certainly the nicest people we have met this side of the Euphrates. A touch of misfortune is doubtless an excellent thing for us all.

As we moved away, we came across a mass of men, women, and camels moving more or less in our own direction, and found, on inquiry, that they were the Welled Ali, an Ánazeh tribe, usually friends of the Roála, but who have sided with the Sebáa in their present quarrel. Their sheykh, Mohammed Dukhi ibn Smeyr, is a man of considerable importance and enjoyed, I believe, the protection of the British Consulate at Damascus some years ago, in an intrigue he set on foot to get the monopoly of conducting the Mecca pilgrims as far as Maan; so we had hardly appeared among his people before we received a polite message from him hoping that we would go no further than to his tents, which he was about to pitch not three miles from our late encampment. Presently afterwards, the sheykh himself rode up and repeated the invitation, and, although we had already sent word to Ibn Mershid of the Gomussa to announce a visit, we could not well refuse this new invitation. Besides, we were anxious to make Mohammed Dukhi's acquaintance. So our tents have been pitched with his.

Mohammed Dukhi ibn Smeyr is a man of about fifty. He is short and thick set, wears a grizzled beard, and has little dark twinkling eyes, expressive of some humour. His face, though not a disagreeable one, hardly inspires one with full confidence, and he is said to have committed acts of cruelty and treachery in his day. To us, however, he is

charming, but in the elaborate Turkish fashion rather than as a Bedouin, making us long speeches full of compliments, and protesting his desire to serve us. We were in some difficulty about a cloak for him, for, when we left Deyr, we did not expect to make acquaintance with any of the great sheykhs but Jedáan, and the only one we had left we were reserving for Beteyen ibn Mershid, sheykh of the Gomussa. Mr. S., however, who knows the Ibn Mershids well, offered to explain matters with them if we would send the cloak we had with us to Mohammed Dukhi, for he was a stranger to us all. It was a handsome cloak of Karyeteyn make, dark blue and white, but without gold embroidery, and we sent it as usual by Hánna; but, to our surprise, Mohammed Dukhi sent it back again, coming himself immediately after to our tent to explain that it was quite unnecessary for travellers so far down in the Hamád to send presents to anyone; that we might want it for others or for ourselves, and a good deal more which came so very *à propos*, that we guessed it must have been suggested to him by Hánna. How this was I do not know, but we have had considerable trouble in persuading our host to keep the gift. He has been sitting with us most of the afternoon, relating tales of the different Europeans he has seen, for the Welled Ali have their summer quarters near Damascus, and are in constant communication with the town. It is to this, I suppose, that he owes his fine manners. As

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a young man he enjoyed a considerable reputation as a warrior, but he lost one of his arms in the wars, and now is satisfied with giving advice on military matters. We sounded him about the prospects of peace with the Roála, and he expressed himself, for his own part, indifferent in the affair. If, however, there is any more fighting, his people shall help the Sebáa. He has promised to see them through it, and considers they have been badly used by the Roála; but he has no personal quarrel with Ibn Shaalán, and should be glad if matters could be arranged. He would like to see the mutesherif of Hama punished, for it was he who was to blame for all the troubles which he had got up in order to fill his own pockets. The conduct of the Turks towards the tribes was "abominable."

All day long people have been bringing horses and mares for us to look at, for we have given out that we wish to exchange Tamarisk for something better, and a very interesting sight it has been. The Welled Ali themselves are not remarkable for their horses, but we saw one very pretty grey horse, Seglawi Jedran of Ibn Nedéri's breed, which had no defect but that of size. It was only fourteen hands. A Gomussa, however, came in later with a magnificent three-year-old, a Samhan el Gomeáa, a bay with black points. This is the most powerful animal we have yet seen. He stands fifteen hands, and has tremendous forearms and quarters, though still

coltish. His action was less good, though it is difficult to judge from the extremely bad riding of the man who brought him. Horses, in the desert, are always ill-broken compared to the mares, for they are seldom used for riding purposes. But our chief delight was to follow, when Beteyen ibn Mershid, sheykh of the Gomussa, rode up to Mohammed Dukhi's tent to pay a visit. He had just purchased from one of his people the "bridle-half" of a three-year-old mare, an Abeyeh Sherrák, and was riding her home when he heard that we were at Mohammed Dukhi's tent. The mare is so much more remarkable than the man, that I must describe her first. She is a dark bay, standing fifteen hands or over. Her head, the first point an Arab looks to, is a good one, though I have seen finer, but it is perfectly set on, and the *mitbakh*, or join of the head and neck, would give distinction to any profile. Her neck is light and well arched, the wither high, the shoulder well sloped, and the quarters so fine and powerful that it is impossible she should be otherwise than a very fast mare. Her length of limb above the hock is remarkable, as is that of the pastern. She carries her tail high, as all well-bred Arabians do, and there is a neatness and finish about every movement, which remind one of a fawn or a gazelle. We are all agreed that she is incomparably superior to anything we have seen here or elsewhere, and would be worth a king's ransom, if kings were still worth ransoming.

Beteyen has paid fourteen camels for his share in the mare, which, at the rate of £5 a camel, gives £70, besides £20 in money, making a total of £90; but this sum represents in reality two-thirds of the whole value, because the "holder of the bridle," as the partner is called who keeps and rides the mare, has the right, if he wishes, of buying up the remaining interest in her for half the sum he has already paid. The mare, then, may be reckoned as having cost Beteyen no more than £135, and the sheykh has every reason to be pleased with his bargain.

Beteyen ibn Mershid himself is less interesting. He is a worthy elderly man, well bred as an Ibn Mershid can hardly help being, but not in any way distinguished. His face is weak and colourless and answers well to the reputation he bears among the tribes, that of a man quite unfit to command the Sebáa in troubled times like the present. We can easily understand that, with such a sheykh at their head, the Gomussa have been willing to accept Jedáan as their real leader, parvenu as he is. It is the misfortune of the Sebáa that just now they are without a capable head, the older sheykhs with the exception of Beteyen being dead, and the young generation not having yet had time to distinguish itself and gain the influence necessary to command the tribe in war. The office of Akíd, or military leader, is an elective one and dependent wholly upon personal merit and influence. Ferhán

ibn Hedéb, charming and sensible as he is, wants the dash necessary for such a position, while Meshúr ibn Mershid, Súliman's nephew, who is talked of as likely some day to do great things, is still a boy. Beteyen then is nominally in command of the tribe, but Jedáan is their real leader by necessity rather than choice.

The reason of Beteyen's visit was that he might be present at the decision of an important suit, which is being tried, and which has been referred to Mohammed Dukhi as arbiter. It is nothing less than an action brought against Jedáan by his new wife's cousin, a young man of the Sirhán, for her recovery, on the plea of his not having consented to the marriage. The case is a very curious one, and we are much interested in the decision, because if given against Jedáan it will be a remarkable instance of the power of law among the tribes. Jedáan is, at the present moment, omnipotent here, while the cousin is a person of no influence and is talked of by everybody as a wrong-headed youth, who has behaved ill to the girl and deserves no countenance. Yet it is thought that he will gain his suit. The girl, as I have said, is nearly thirty and the cousin only twenty-three; so that his claim to her cannot be considered as anything but one of interest. He has refused to marry her himself, or rather put it off from year to year, till the girl's father was tired of waiting. Jedáan seems not to have known of the existence of this cousin till after the mar-

riage was arranged, and then to have thought that it would be merely a case of "damages" at worst. But the cousin has demanded the girl herself of the father, or four other daughters in her stead, a preposterous claim, but one which it seems can legally be made. As a compromise, the father is willing to give his only remaining daughter in place of the one just married; but the cousin will not hear of this, and, by way of asserting his right, ran one of the old man's camels through with his spear. The whole matter has been referred to Mohammed Dukhi for decision, and the sheykh's tent is crowded to hear the verdict.

Abd er Rahman, as a learned jurist of Aleppo, is especially interested in this lawsuit and has explained it to us, most fortunately, for we could not understand it without him. What is now being discussed is the preliminary argument whether the case is to be tried by Bedouin or Mohammedan law, and, though nobody supposes but what the Bedouin law must prevail, an attempt is being made to substitute the other in Jedáan's interests. Abd er Rahman, who knows the Mussulman law, has been consulted, and has very likely suggested this line of action to Jedáan, for according to it the father's offer of a second daughter would be held sufficient reparation, on the principle that "an injured man if replaced in the position held before injury, ceases to be injured." The cousin however appeals to Bedouin law, which would either annul the marriage or at

least give him the girl's dowry (two thousand piastres in this instance).

Reports have come in of a ghazú from the Roála, so we have been recommended to keep on the alert to night.

April 8.—A heavy shower has fallen and refreshed us all. No news of the Roála, but everybody seems a little anxious.

Mohammed Dukhi after all shirked deciding the lawsuit himself, and has referred it to three arbitrators, chosen as in England by the parties to the suit. One of these has been objected to on either side, and the third, afraid of the responsibility, has declared himself unable to decide, without reference to the sheykh of the Sirhán, who is somewhere down in the Jôf, hundreds of miles away. So the case stands over till he can be summoned.*

We have all marched together to-day some eight or nine miles, old Mohammed Dukhi with his youngest child, a boy of six years old, riding a delúl. While on the march we overtook the Gomussa and joined a party of them. Amongst them was a

* The sequel, we have ascertained, was as follows:—It was finally agreed that the case should wait the arrival of the bride's tribe. The betrothed cousin then brought forward his complaint for judgment by the Sheykh, who decided that, the bride having taken no step to oblige her cousin to keep his promise and marry her, his right remained valid. This was signified to Jedáan, who at once put the bride on a camel, and sent her to the Sheykh of the Sirhán. A great wedding was solemnised, Jedáan being one of the guests, and no ill will on either side marred the cordial enjoyment of festivities for three whole days.

young man mounted on a rather showy colt, which he told us was a Jilfan Stam el bdulad, and he introduced himself as a son of Mijuel the Mesrab, who is well known at Damascus as the husband of an English lady. He was extremely polite, invited us to his tent and begged us if we went to Damascus, to go to his father's house. His tribe, the Mesrab, is a very small one, and moves about with the Gomussa, having hardly a separate existence, if it is not indeed part of the Gomussa or Resallín. The sheykh, Mijuel's elder brother, a funny little old man of anything but distinguished appearance, we met later in Beteyen's tent. The young man himself goes every winter with the tribe to the Hamád, but spends the summer at Damascus or Homs, in either of which towns his father has a house. As regards his stepmother we have constantly heard her spoken of in the desert, and always in terms of respect. She is a charitable person, and a providence to her husband's people, supplying them with money, arms and everything they require. Mijuel himself is talked of as a supremely fortunate man, the possessor of boundless wealth, though some think his marriage a *mésalliance*, as the lady is not of Arab blood, consequently not *asil* (noble).

Presently after this, we came upon Beteyen, whose tent was being pitched in a wady, the entrance to some broken hilly ground lying north of our line of march. Here we alighted. There is water somewhere close by, in another of the series of pools I

have mentioned, and we have sent all our animals to drink and the skins to be filled.

We have been much interested this afternoon in a family of Sleb who are staying in the Gomussa camp. The head of the family Huéran ibn Malek is considered the principal sheykh of the Sleb, and as such is allowed to sit in Beteyen's tent, but the others remain outside. He is a man of thirty or thereabouts, with a dark not very prepossessing countenance, and a rather sensual look. He is dressed as an Arab, and might be taken for one at first sight. Two younger men, however, his relations, are exceedingly good looking, with delicately cut features, and the whitest possible teeth. There is a boy too who is perfectly beautiful, with almond-shaped eyes, and a complexion like stained ivory. A little old woman, not more than four feet high, and two girls of fourteen or fifteen, the most lovely little creatures I ever saw, complete the family. They are all very short, but in perfect proportion, their hands and feet exaggeratedly small, and all have a strange half-frightened smile, and an astonished look in the eyes, which remind one rather of wild creatures than of men and women. Indeed, they go about the camp as if expecting every minute to have to run for their lives, and I am sure they would do it like gazelles. Their dress is made entirely of gazelle skins, and consists of a long garment reaching to the ankles, something in the style of the Arab mashlakh, but with sleeves reaching to the wrists

and sometimes drawn over the hands; a capote attached to it covers the head and part of the face, so that muffled up they look like the pictures one sees of Greenlanders—only the covering here is for a protection from the sun rather than the cold.

The Sleb have no horses or camels, only a few goats and donkeys. On the latter they ride, not astride but sideways, with a delúl saddle and double crutch, men and women alike. The women have none of the Arab modesty, and make no pretence of covering their faces, but go about the camp with their male relations, on begging tours, all together, as gipsies do in England. It is impossible to believe that these people can be Arabs, though the Bedouins here declare them to be such, and Abd er Rahman calls them Mussulmans; but all admit that they are something quite different from themselves, that they have customs and practices of their own which no Bedouin would tolerate, that they eat hedgehogs (*gumfit*) and tell fortunes, and are of such base blood that no Bedouin however poor would marry one of their women, a remarkable thing when one considers how very beautiful they are. That it is so we ascertained from Huéran himself, who said simply enough, "We would give our daughters to the Arabs if they would take them."

The Sleb are the true children of the Hamád, never leaving it summer or winter, but following the herds of gazelles as they migrate north and south. On these they live, making their food, their clothing,

and their tents out of the creatures they catch or kill. We are anxious to see more of them, and find out if possible who and what they are. That they are not mere gipsies is as certain as that they are not mere Arabs; but we suspect them of having the same origin with the gipsies, that is to say, that they came originally from India. The extreme smallness of their hands and feet, their low stature, and the clearness of their dark complexions favour this notion. It is quite possible that one of the tribes, which left India and are now known as Bohemians or Gipsies in Europe, may have stopped on the way and settled, if their wandering life can be called settling, in the Desert. We have agreed with Huéran that he shall show us the way to the Roála camp. His people are camped somewhere on the line of pools towards Damascus, and he will be naturally going that way. The Sleb take no part in the Bedouin quarrels, and are molested by neither party, so that we can travel safely with them. To-morrow, if all goes well, we shall start.

To-day, like yesterday, has been spent looking at mares and horses. Several very fine ones have been brought for us to look at, for, though there is no idea of our purchasing, we have expressed a wish to see all we can. The finest are a Dakhmeh em Amr and a Risheh Sherabi, both belonging to outside breeds, but very perfect specimens. The Risheh is a bay with four white legs, three years old, and fully fifteen hands high, a great, powerful mare; the

Dakhmeh a picture of beauty, but smaller. Mr. S. has been trying to persuade Beteyen to transfer his new purchase, Abeyeh Sherrák, to us, but I fear it will be without success. He at first said he would, but afterwards recalled his assent, on the plea that just now, with the Roála war on his hands, it would not look well for him to part with a useful mare. It is probably a matter of money, and we have too little with us to be able to offer a really over-powering price. Some Englishmen, who visited the Gomussa near Aleppo a few years ago, seem to have impressed them all with the idea that it is as easy to get £500 as £50 from a European.

We were sitting in our tent looking at the horses which were brought us from time to time, when a young man of a most agreeable countenance came and sat down in front of it, after saluting Mr. S. At first we did not know who he was, but presently he explained that he was Meshúr ibn Mershid; and Mr. S. recognised him as the son of one of his oldest friends, Mitbakh, Suliman ibn Mershid's elder brother, and we made him come and sit by us. This is the young man who was said to have murdered Ibn Shaalán in his own tent, and who had sent us the invitation we received at Aleppo quite at the beginning of our travels. The circumstance interested us, and we asked him what his feeling was about the war, and whether he wished it to go on. "*Ouf*," he answered, ("certainly,") "it must." "But you and your people have

suffered from it already. Have you not lost enough tents, and mares, and camels?" "We must get them back," he said. "And your lives? was not Ibn Shaalán killed in the war?" "Yes, Jedáan ibn Shaalán." "He was killed,—and by whom?" "Oh, by one of the Ánazeh." "Which?" Meshúr would not answer. "We know it was you who killed him." "Well, it was done in battle, and with the spear. Look—it went in at his back and came out here," pointing to his right side. "He was dead directly. When he fell I took his mare, but I would not keep her. I let her go, and she followed her companions. I took another mare the same day, but I let them both go."* Meshúr told us all this with the most good-humoured boyish face, contrasting strangely with the deeds he described. "Jedáan," he said, "was just my age, ("el mesqúin," poor fellow,) and was a fine horseman, but it was fated. He was Sotamm's nephew, and he makes the fifth of the family we have killed in compensation for my father's death." Mitbatkh ibn Mershid was killed by five men of the Roála tribe, and this is why Meshúr claimed five lives of the latter. But if the price of blood had been paid, it would have been for only one life.

I took Meshúr's portrait, and while doing so a middle-aged man rode up and saluted Mr. S., who recognised him as a certain Seyd ibn Barghash, who

* It is considered a chivalrous thing for a Sheykh to let go the mare of an enemy he has killed.

had done him a good turn some years ago. The incident was as follows: The King of Italy had sent an agent to Aleppo to buy horses, and the Italian consul there had begged Mr. S.'s advice and assistance in the matter. Abd er Rahman was employed by them to negotiate for a particular horse they had seen and approved. He set out with the money, about £100, to pay for it, and was attacked near Tudmur by a party of thirty-six Gomussa out on a ghazú. Abd er Rahman in vain begged to be allowed to pass, saying, "I am sent by the English consul for a horse," but they, not knowing him, would have robbed him had not Seyd ibn Barghash, who was of the party, and was a friend of Mr. S.'s, insisted on their letting him go unmolested.

Beteyen and Meshúr have both been to Hîyel in the Jebel Shammar, and give exactly the same account of the horses of Nejd as everyone else has given. I need not repeat it. Ibn Rashid, they say, buys his horses from them. As to the winter migration of the Anazeh, it is not true that they ever get as far south as Jebel Shammar. They stop north of the Nefúds, perhaps three or four days' journey from the hills, but they sometimes go there on ghazús, or on business to the towns. Ibn Rashid, however, is not friendly with them, being by birth a Shammar.

We were talking over the purchase of his mare with Beteyen, when a messenger from his tent

arrived, begging him to return there at once, as a ghazú from the Roála had been seen and an attack might be expected. At first we thought it might be one of those little dramatic incidents arranged beforehand when negotiations are going on, either to enforce an argument, or to interrupt it at a convenient moment. The more so as Beteyen did not at once take notice of the summons. It was not till several men had ridden up hurriedly to his tent, and dismounting, stuck their spears in the ground, and shouted impatiently to him to come, that he rose with a sigh, as if unwillingly, to face the necessity of action. He is, in fact, a poor creature, and it is easy to see that his people have no great respect for him. They spoke to him now in a peremptory tone one would not expect to hear used towards a sheykh, and still he dawdled, while Meshúr, at the first word of fighting, had jumped to his feet and was gone. We did not follow Beteyen, not wishing to be in the way while important matters were being discussed, but we could see a great coming and going about the Sheykh's tent, and presently Mohammed Dukhi came to wish us good-bye, before going to look after his own people. The little speech he made, was a model of Oriental politeness. He begged us not to forget him, and asked Wilfrid to be his vakil, *wassi*, or representative, with me to remind me of him, but that, if I required any service of him at any time, then I should require no wassi, but had only to give my orders Mohammed Dukhi, though too artificial

in his manners to please me, is evidently a man of character. The way he treats and is treated by his people is quite a different thing from Beteyen's. The Welled Ali are kept by him in capital order, and no one dares sit down in the sheykh's tent, unless he be of a certain rank. Mohammed Dukhi's peremptory "gúm, gúm," ("get up, get up,") is heard the moment an unauthorised person takes that liberty. With Beteyen, they all do just as they like, and he is too mild and timid to make a remark.

Beteyen's harem, to which I paid a visit, interested me on account of the history of the principal personage in it. The hatóun Feydeh was the wife of Súliman ibn Mershid, after whose death she married his cousin, Beteyen. She is a daughter of Mohammed el Faris, brother to Sfuk, and uncle to Ferhán Pasha, Abd ul Kerim and Faris. She seemed delighted to talk to me about her own people, the Shammar, and spoke of Faris as "a sweet boy." I liked her, but the pleasure of my visit was spoiled by her second child, Hazáh, a boy of two, beginning to cry for a coffee cup and refusing to be comforted or silenced. He made such a noise that we could hardly hear ourselves speak. Besides the spoilt baby, Feydeh has a boy of five, named Aduán, a nice little fellow; both these are Súliman's children. There were so many tiresome people sitting round in the tent, that even without the noise I could not have got much talk out of

Feydeh, and indeed I was extremely glad when I saw Hánna coming to say that the Beg wanted to speak to me at our own tent.

The ghazú story is not a sham this time. Scouts have come in announcing the approach of a large body of horsemen, a thousand they say, with advanced parties of men on dromedaries, armed with muskets. One party of fifty are reported to be quite close. They were seen in a wady, just over the brow of a hill not two miles off, yet, such seems to be the helplessness of the Gomussa for want of a chief, that no attempt is being made to cut off this small party, nor any preparation for meeting the enemy till Jedáan shall arrive. Messengers have been sent off post haste for him, and other messengers to call in outlying sections of the tribe, and warn them to keep with the main body. Meshúr is the leading spirit in this, young as he is, and Beteyen is quite put aside. For our own part, we have contented ourselves with tethering our mares at the tent door and having everything ready for a sudden march. We are rather in an exposed position, being at the extreme edge of the Ánazeh camp with no tents between us and the threatened danger; but Ghánim, who is a Roála, assures us that the ghazú will not meddle with us, and we are anxious only for our mares. Wilfrid is hoping to see something of the battle, which seems imminent for to-morrow morning. Beteyen's camp is thronged with people coming and going, and from every tent we

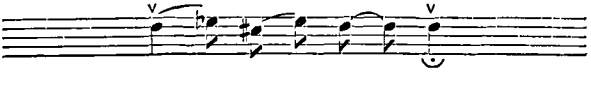
can hear the war song chanted in unison. The Gomussa chant is as follows:

or sometimes a third lower:

that of the Moayaja major instead of minor:

and that of the Welled Ali less melodious:

or thus:



The rhythm of the two first chants, the Gomussa and Moayaja, is extremely fine; that of the third, which I cannot write otherwise than by seven quavers in the bar, produces an odd effect, and sounds incomplete.

April 9.—Something very like a panic has seized the Gomussa camp. The day had hardly begun to

dawn when every tent was struck, and a precipitate retreat commenced across the hills. We sent Mohammed to the Sheykh's tent, to ask what was going to be done, and all the answer was that he must join Jedáan, who was somewhere "out there" to the north. The Gomussa were in such a hurry that we soon found ourselves left alone; but Wilfrid, who had ridden to some rising ground in the direction of the reported enemy, coming back without having seen anything, we determined to have our coffee comfortably, and made Hánna light his fire while the camels were loading. He was rather flurried, but did as he was told. To the north, guarding the line of retreat, we could still see parties of horsemen occupying the heights, and there was no danger of our not catching up our friends. We were very unwilling to go after them, for their march is quite out of our way, but the Sleb have disappeared with the rest, and we had no choice but to follow. Besides, we are still hankering after Beteyen's mare, which we should be sorry altogether to give up hopes of.

As we were sitting drinking our coffee with the camels just loaded, a horseman appeared from the south, and for a moment we thought it one of the enemy, but it proved to be Meshúr who had ventured out alone to reconnoitre. He had seen nothing, but advised us not to stay any longer so far from the main body, and then rode away to join the men on the hills. So we mounted and followed the

wady, along which Beteyen and his people had travelled. An Arab march is slow, even when at its quickest; and in an hour or so we came upon the stragglers, and then upon the main body. We rode up a height, and from it saw the wonderful sight of twenty or thirty thousand camels, with a proportionate number of horsemen and footmen, converging by half-a-dozen winding wadys, towards a central plain commanded by a high tell on which the horsemen were gathering. It was difficult to understand why so vast a host should have been scared by the report of even a thousand horsemen. The plan of campaign, if plan there was, seems to have been to concentrate the forces in an open place, for when first threatened with attack the tribes were scattered in a number of wadys out of sight of each other, and were in danger of being beaten in detail. Still, we cannot yet understand why a body of horsemen equal or superior to that of the Roála was not sent out against them. Every tribe and every section, on the contrary, retreated with its own escort, and no attempt was made to-day at taking the offensive. This has disappointed us, for we expected better things of Jedáan. Our camels are such good walkers that from being last we soon joined the head of the column at which we found Beteyen, mounted, not on his mare as a sheykh should have been at such a moment, but snugly on his delúl, with his favourite child in a pannier beside him and a black slave squatting behind.

We thought he seemed rather ashamed of himself, but it is evident he is not a man of war. A little further on we overtook Mohammed Dukhi in a similar position, keeping guard over his sheep, for the Welled Ali have their sheep with them, and these are always sent to the front on a march. Mohammed Dukhi has the excuse of his lost arm, and at least he shows energy in council. The thing, however, struck us as unworthy of a man of his reputation.

About a mile beyond the tell, and in sight of the Tudmur hills, Beteyen stopped, and the Gomussa tents soon made a brave show on the level plain they have chosen, with the Welled Ali in front of them, and other tribes arriving from the east and south-east. It was terribly hot, and we had a disagreeable hour's waiting in the sun before the tents were pitched, and then we discovered that there was no water, nor had we brought any with us in the hurry of the retreat. This is most annoying as it hampers our movements in every way, and will oblige us probably to make a forced march to-morrow. If it was not for Beteyen's mare, which we still hope to get, we would not stay here now, but go back to the pools we have left. We have not come more than twelve miles to-day.

While waiting in this way, young Meshúr came in from the rear with information that the Roála had retreated, at least from our part of the line, and everybody was delighted at the news. Still

no attempt was made at following them, even with a small party of horsemen who might have done so without any danger, the Gomussa being so much better mounted than the Roála. All this is from want of a trusted leader. As Meshúr said: "We are like sheep here without a shepherd." The great tent, however, was at last pitched, and our own close by, and towards it horsemen came riding in from all points of the compass. It was a grand opportunity for looking over the Gomussa mares, and one we did not neglect. It is not worth while mentioning all we saw to-day, but amongst others was brought the dam of our coveted Abeyeh, a fine old brood mare, though less handsome than her daughter. Many of the best shaped animals were fearfully disfigured with firing, while others had hopeless backs, and others again feet ruined by long standing in the iron fetters used by the Arabs to prevent stealing. With all the real merit, however, of these mares, there were hardly a dozen which could be called first-class, and not one equal to the Abeyeh, or more beautiful than our own Saade.

At last, a body of thirty horsemen arrived, headed by Jedáan on his Kehílan Akhrás. His face wore a curious expression, partly of satisfaction, partly of disgust, and we read it to mean the contempt he felt for his allies, and the pleasure at finding himself so necessary to them. Satisfaction at the result of the day's manœuvres he can scarcely have, for it now turns out that, although the Roála

have retreated, it has not been empty-handed. The demonstration made against the Gomussa was in all probability a feint, for the main body of the enemy fell upon an outlying section of the Welled Ali who had disregarded Mohammed Dukhi's orders to close in. From these they have taken a thousand camels, losing, however, some mares, and a man killed. Mohammed Dukhi is very angry, but why was he not at the head of his men? A council of war has been going on all the afternoon in Beteyen's tent, but nothing is likely to come of it. We are getting rather ashamed of our friends.

The only *man* among the Gomussa is young Meshúr, and we look upon him as the future leader of the tribe. As we were sitting with him and Beteyen in our tent this evening, Wilfrid began admiring some silver-hilted pistols he was wearing at his girdle, and which he told us had belonged to Súliman ibn Mershid, his uncle; and without more ado he unbuckled them and handed them to Wilfrid, insisting that he should keep them. Wilfrid was pleased at the manner in which he did this, but answered that he could not accept them, unless Meshúr would in turn accept his revolver, and, moreover, become his brother. Both proposals were very joyfully accepted, and the oath was exchanged in presence of Beteyen, who looked on the while rather crest-fallen at the honour done to his nephew. Meshúr has since this been exceedingly nice and affectionate to us, and has shown us

all sorts of attentions, besides coming to dine with us in our tent this evening. I fear, however, that the incident will not have improved our prospects with Beteyen of getting his mare. But no matter. Before giving Meshúr the revolver, Wilfrid made him promise that he would never use it against Faris. This Meshúr readily did, for, he said, Faris and he were already friends, though they had never met.

Ghanim has been round all the camps with the mares, to beg for water, and got a little here and a little there, but the Ánazeh seem to give themselves very little trouble about carrying water with them. The only person who had any quantity to spare was Ibn Kardúsh, sheykh of the Mesékha. Others had given milk or lebben, which the mares drank, but they like water better. The Sleb have disappeared from our camp, so our plan of going with them has fallen through. It is very tiresome. We shall now have to make a long march nearly due north, to a well called Boharra, not ten miles south of Tudmur, and all out of our way—but water we must have to-morrow.

April 10.—We have had a long thirsty march to-day, though not altogether a dull one.

I am sorry to say that we did not part friends with Beteyen. He was jealous, I suppose, of the favour Meshúr has found in our eyes, and of the presents we have given him, and at parting this morning, he made a sort of begging speech to Mr. S., who told him he ought to be ashamed of himself

for making it. We had already promised him the cloak, due to his position as Sheykh, as soon as we should be able to buy him one, but he was not satisfied. I am sorry all the same that Mr. S. should have spoken to him as he did, for he told him his request was only worthy of a felláh. Meshúr, who was present, very properly took his uncle's part, but Beteyen would not be appeased. Of course all negotiations for the mare are now at an end, but I care more for the disagreeable thought that we have made an enemy—our only one—in the desert.

We marched a little earlier than the rest of our neighbours, and soon got clear of the Gomussa, and travelled on during the day with an advanced party of Welled Ali, who were hurrying on to the wells with their sheep, now two days without being watered. These Welled Ali shepherds are a rougher set than the Sebáa, and were not over-polite. I think with a little encouragement in the way of timidity on our part, they might even have become aggressive, but we were too well mounted and too well armed to be afraid of them. The plain to-day was covered with hares, which jumped up before us as the great line of camels, sheep, and horsemen swept it like an army of beaters. These were pursued by greyhounds, and by Wilfrid on horseback, who coursed and shot two alone on Hagar. She is quite fresh again in spite of the heat and the scarcity of water, and enjoyed

the galloping amazingly. We were travelling all day towards the hills, at the foot of which the well was said to be, and our impatience and the fast pace of our camels carried us in front of the whole Anazeh army. Their march was indeed like that of a flight of locusts, as it covered perhaps ten miles in breadth, eating up every green thing before it. Green things just here were scarce enough, though every now and then we crossed a wady with some good grass. We had been told that we should see a ruined tower, and that the wells would be found near it, so we pushed on till we were quite alone, and our day's march must have been close on forty miles.

It was half-past three when we at last reached the delightful shade of the ruin, the first building we have seen since leaving Arak. It seems to have been a convent once, in the days when Palmyra was a city, for there is a cross cut on the stone lintel of the gateway, and we have discovered cells and the foundations of a church. It must even then have been a solitary place, though perhaps the lower Damascus road may have passed near it. There are several wells, with a good supply of water, and one can make out the traces of ancient fields or gardens in the wady, watered from these. Now, all is desolate enough. A pair of rock pigeons and some kestrels are the only inhabitants. The tower is square and of good cut stone, in the same style as the old buildings of

Palmyra, which is not more than twelve or fifteen miles off. Mohammed, of course, knows the place, and calls the tower Kasr Hazim; the wells, Sakr. These are deep, and it was tantalising to be unable to get at the water before the camels arrived, for we had left them some way behind, in our anxiety to get a drink.

While waiting under the ruined tower, and half asleep, we suddenly heard the Arab war chant, and looking up, saw a horseman cantering over the hill behind us, lance in hand. For a moment we were mystified into thinking he might be an enemy, but he was alone, and, as he drew near, I thought I knew his voice. Presently we recognised Meshúr on his grey mare, come to wish his brother a last good-bye. We were very much pleased to see him, for it showed a good feeling on his part to have left his people to pay us a visit, as the tribes have halted several miles short of the wells. We asked about his mare, and he told us she was a Hadbeh, and very fast, which we can well believe, for she is extremely handsome, and has a fine way of moving.

She is twelve years old, though she does not look it, and, as he says, they grew up together and have never been parted, and it was mounted on her back that he killed Jedáan ibn Shaalán last year. He entreated Wilfrid to take her as a present, she was all he had worth giving; but this of course could not be.

Meanwhile the camels arrived, and, while the

tents were pitching, a frightful wrangling arose among the servants. The chief disputants were Ghanim and Ferhán, who, before we could interfere, had come to blows. Meshúr rushed in and separated them, pushing Ghanim back, who had already drawn his knife and was looking "ugly." On inquiring into the cause, it appeared that Ferhán was tired of having the whole work of the camel-driving thrown on his shoulders, and had been exasperated at last by Ghanim's riding the chestnut mare, when we were out of sight, after a gazelle, in spite of the sore back she has lately had. The Christian servants of course took part against Ghanim, but of that we took no notice. Wilfrid, however, made Ferhán affirm on oath all that he had said, and then Ghanim admitted that it was true, and Wilfrid told him to leave the camp. He went away in dudgeon, and sat for an hour or so on the top of the tower, but then came down and begged me to intercede for him. Meshúr, too, spoke in his favour, and, as we really like the boy, Wilfrid consented to forgive him if Ferhán would declare himself satisfied, and Ghanim would promise there should be no more trouble. Ferhán, who is the kindest-hearted creature in the world, readily agreed to this, and Ghanim gave the promise in the usual form, "*ala rási*"—"on my head be it," so the matter has ended. I am glad of it, as it is the only quarrel we have had on the journey.

We have been entertaining Meshúr with all the

hospitality we can command, and he has dined with us, but would not stay the night. There would be danger for him, he said, to stay away so far from his people, on account of the blood-feud he has with the Ibn Shaalán. I have given him a silver handled knife as a keepsake, telling him that it belonged to my grandfather and greatgrandfather, which has made him value it the more, and now he has mounted his mare and cantered back the way he came. He is a brave, warm-hearted boy, and, unless he is overtaken by fate in his wars and blood-feuds, will be a great man some day.

The water here, when first drawn, tastes of rotten eggs and sulphur, but improves on standing in the air. It seems to be quite wholesome.

We have now bade good-bye to the Sebáa, and having our heads set, as the Arabs say, towards home, Wilfrid has agreed that the moment is come for reading our letters; so I leave off in fear and trembling, to do so, for we have had no news from home since the 20th of November, nearly five months ago.

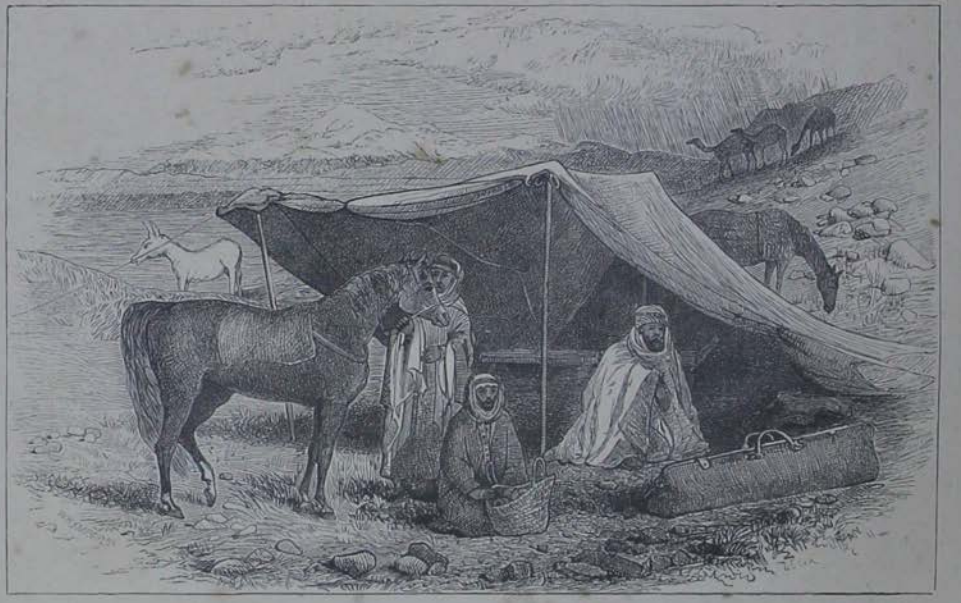
CHAPTER XXI.

How the earth burns! each pebble underfoot
Is as a living thing with power to wound.
The white sand quivers; and the footfall mute
Of the slow camels strikes but gives no sound,
As if they trod the air, not solid ground.
'Tis noon; and the beasts' shadows even are fled
Back to their feet; and there is fire around,
And fire beneath, and, overhead, the sun.

March under a burning sun—The Welled Ali and their sheep—We come to the Roála camp—One hundred and fifty thousand camels—Sotamm Ibn Shaalán receives us—Diplomatic checks—Sotamm's wife—The Uttfa—Mohammed's choice—Goodbye to the Desert.

April 11.—Thank God! our news is all good news, and we can go on lighthearted now to the end of our journey, enjoying the prospect thoroughly of the delights of home.

We left the Bir Sakr this morning, just as the flocks of the Welled Ali were beginning to arrive. Poor creatures! they have had no water these three days, and have been driven in their thick winter fleeces at least fifty miles under a burning sun. We did not stop to talk long with the shepherds, but made away south-west in the direction of Damascus. Everyone assures us that we shall meet the Roála on the road, or at least a party of Sleb, who will tell us where the Roála are. Then Mohammed has



OUR OWN TENT, WITH A VIEW OF MOUNT HERMON.

[Vol. II., p. 130.

a vague knowledge of the country for some miles farther yet, and a black slave from Beteyen's tent is with us, recommended by Meshúr to our protection. He, too, knows something of the road. Our way lay up a wady between two well-marked ridges, and at nine we passed a ruined khan on the old Palmyra road, called according to Mohammed, Halbe. The country is covered with scarlet poppies, camomiles white and yellow, irises, and a sort of pink aster, all in the greatest profusion, as if in a flower garden.

We have stopped for the night in a dry watercourse thick with grass, in which quails are calling, and I can hear a cuckoo not far off, sitting probably in a solitary *betún* tree, the first of the sort we have seen in the Desert. The betún is a kind of ash, and common enough along the dry river beds of the Sahara. Here they call it *button*. The evening is oppressively hot. Ghanim has begun singing to his rebáb something about the "*harb Ibn Shaalán*," the Roála war. Our march to-day was eighteen miles.

Mohammed has climbed to the top of the ridge to our left, and has come back with the news that he has seen camp fires in the plain beyond.*

April 12.—Another terribly hot morning, but about noon a strong wind sprang up from the northwest, tempering the power of the sun, and it was fortunate, for we had to wait two hours without

* This must have been Ibn Shaalán returning from his ghazú.

shade at a well. We had been overtaken in the course of the morning by a couple of men mounted on a dromedary, who had been sent after us by Meshúr to show us the way. They were Roála who had gone to the Sebáa in the suite of their Sheykh's wife, when she had chosen to return to her father Jedáan; and it shows how liberal the Bedouins are, in their toleration of individuals while at war, that these men had been living for some weeks in Jedáan's tent, at the very moment that their master, Ibn Shaalán, was advancing against him. Now they were being sent back without so much, I believe, as a pledge not to reveal secrets. The truth is, in Bedouin strategy as in Bedouin politics there is no possibility of secrecy. Every member of the tribe has a right to know everything that happens, and, from the very publicity of what goes on, there is no fear of spies. It is useless to try and conceal the truth, so no attempt to do so is made. The black slave was very ill to-day, and lay in a half torpid state on his camel, with his head hanging down over its shoulder and exposed to the full glare of the sun. But this is all the comfort Arabs expect to get when they are ill. They somehow manage to sleep in this position without falling off.

At the well we were overtaken also by a small party of Welled Ali, driving a hundred or so of sheep and lambs before them for the Easter sales at Damascus. I cannot think many of them will arrive there alive, for the weather is prodigiously

hot and they are making forced marches. A good many lambs are already dead, and they have given us one which, as we are short of provisions, we are glad enough to take. When the shepherds see that a lamb can go no farther they cut its throat, and then the meat is lawful eating, though it would not be so if the animal had died of its own accord.

We should hardly have found the well if it had not been for the Roála, as it lay in a very unlikely place and, not having been used this year, had no tracks leading to it. It is very deep, sixty feet, as we measured by the rope used; but the water is sweet and good. Its name is Buséyri. All the beasts, camels as well as mares, drank copiously, my mare, the most abstemious, not being content with less than four buckets full. The Welled Ali shepherds have insisted on keeping company with us, in the hope of getting through the Roála country under our protection; but their attempt to go through at all is to me inexplicable. They have with them, besides the sheep, fifteen camels and a nice looking mare and foal, all lawful prize of war!

April 13.—No abatement of the heat. The sheep go with their tongues hanging out, poor things, and their owners have shorn some of them in the hopes of saving them. Soon after we started, we passed between two high hills, Keukle to the right and Rummákh to the left. The Roála told

us this story of them:—There was a great warrior who, from his skill with the spear, *rámmh*, was called Rummákh. He lived on this hill and kept a wife on the opposite hill, and another on a third still farther on. The name of the first was Kokhle, because she blackened her eyes with kohl; but the name of the second was Áda. Áda was the favourite wife, and I quite expected the story to have gone on to say that one day, vexed with their perpetual quarrelling, Rummákh had run them both through the body with his spear, when the Roála stupidly stopped, and said they had forgotten the rest of it.

We have made a brisk march all day, doing quite three and a half miles in the hour, and beguiled by the assurances of the Roála that their friends were close at hand. About two o'clock Wilfrid found a small hole in the limestone rock, holding a few bucketsfull of rain-water, which we gave to our mares, and then we came suddenly on some people filling their goatskins from a larger hole of the same sort a mile farther on. We have been eight hours on the march, and must have got over thirty miles of ground; and now, although the Roála are really close by, we have stopped just short of them in a beautiful wady full of grass, sending on Ghanim and the two men on the delúl to announce our arrival at Ibn Shaalán's tent. Mr. S. recommends this on the score of our dignity, and I am glad of it for the mares' and camels' sake, who are now sure

of a good evening's meal. The site of a Bedouin camp, if by any chance they have happened to occupy the same ground more than two nights, is generally eaten as bare as a board, and unexpected guests suffer in consequence. We have killed a centipede in the tent quite six inches long. Ghanim calls it "*Om Arba o arbaïn*" (the "mother of forty-four"), alluding to its legs. A dozen or so of the Roála have come to our camp from their own, which they tell us is close by, just over the brow of a low hill. They are in high delight at the success of their ghazú, for Ibn Shaalán came back yesterday, and to-day they have been dividing the spoils.

While we were entertaining them with coffee, who should come up but the Welled Ali shepherds. The chief man of our new guests, one Abu Ghíddeli,* asked who they were and whether the sheep were ours. "They have followed us," we said, "but they are not ours; we do not interfere." We expected an instant raid to follow, for indeed the Roála had every right to the prize; but Abu Ghíddeli only laughed. "*Ma ikhálif*," he said, "*nakhna shebáat*" ("Never mind, we have all had enough"). So here they are still unmolested.

Ghanim has returned. The first words Sotamm said to him, when he heard who we were and whence we had come, were "Have they brought my wife

* Abu Ghíddeli is the owner of the best strain of Maneghi blood known, better even than Ibn Sbeyel's.

back to me?" He sent word, however, to say we were welcome, and to excuse himself from coming to meet us, on the score of fatigue. His tent is fully eight miles away.

Sunday, April 14.—To-day we have seen the most wonderful spectacle the Desert has to show—the Roála camp. We came upon it quite suddenly, as, crossing a low ridge of rising ground, we looked down over the plain of Saíghal and saw it covered, as far as the eye could reach, with a countless multitude of tents and men and mares and camels. In the extreme distance, at least ten miles away, lay the lake of Saíghal glittering white in the sun; and the whole space between it and where we stood seemed occupied, while east and west there was at least an equal depth of camp. We have estimated the whole number of tents at twenty thousand, and of camels at a hundred and fifty thousand; and, at the sight, I felt an emotion of almost awe, as when one first sees the sea. Nothing that we have seen hitherto in the way of multitude approaches to this. The Sebáa, with their allies, may be as numerous, but they have not a fourth part of the Roála camels, nor have we on any occasion seen them all collected thus in one place. It gave us, too, an immense idea of the real size of the tribe thus congregated, to find that, travelling at our usual pace, it was more than two hours before we arrived at Sotamm's tent, which stood, they told us, in the centre of the camp, and that during all our route we were never a hundred

yards away from a tent. Sheep there were none, however, except high up on the slopes of the surrounding hills, and we were struck by the comparatively small number of the mares. Camels seemed everything, and of these herd after herd we passed through, of a hundred, and five hundred, and a thousand strong. The tents themselves are smaller than those of the Sebáa, and only the Sheykh's is an imposing one. It is set on nine poles, and is perhaps a hundred feet from end to end. Of creature comfort, however, it is as destitute as the rest of them. A bit of carpet and a few camel saddles are all its furniture, with two tall coffee-pots and a coffee ladle, two yards long set upon wheels. Perhaps a hundred people were seated in the tent. A little dark-faced man of about thirty, much pitted with small-pox and wearing a pink cotton kefíye, received us as we dismounted, and with some difficulty we recognised in him Sotamm ibn Shaalán, the Sheykh of the Roála.

The family of Ibn Shaalán, though not accounted of the oldest nobility, has nevertheless the greatest hereditary position of any in the Desert. Sotamm can boast that by right of birth he rules over a population of at least twenty thousand souls, and can bring five thousand men into the field. How the family first acquired its position I have not been able to find out, but they have held it now for so respectable a number of generations, that the sheykhdom is hereditary with them, the Ibn Jendals

and Tayars notwithstanding.* Among the Sebáa, and the other Ánazeh, there is nothing of the sort, for each section there of the tribes has its own independent sheykh, and Jedáan's position with them is merely a personal one. Only the Jerba family in Mesopotamia can at all compare with the Ibn Shaaláns in importance, while in wealth and power the Roála stand far above the Shammar. With all this, Sotamm himself does not appear to have much influence with his people. It is easy to see that he is weak and irresolute, a mere puppet in their hands. He is not even their akíd or military leader, which he could not fail to be, if he had any of the qualities necessary for the position. The Akíd of the Roála is a little old man named Hamid, Sheykh of the Majil, a section of the tribe. It was he that led the ghazú the other day, not Sotamm, though Sotamm was of the party.

Our reception here has been polite and amiable, but not particularly cordial. Sotamm complains of being tired and knocked up with his campaign and has left us alone most of the day. In the afternoon, however, he came with Sheykh Hamid, the Akíd, to pay us a visit, and we took the opportunity to open negotiations with him on the subject which most interests us, our diplomatic mission from Jedáan. Before leaving the Sebáa, Abd er Rahman, the Aleppine Doctor of Divinity, who is my fellow

* Compare the account of the Drayhy ibn Chaláan in the Récit de Fatalla Sayeghir, as given by Lamartine.

plenipotentiary in this matter, got special instructions from Jedáan as to terms, and we are authorised now to propose an arrangement on the following basis:

1. Peace shall be made.
2. All claims for losses by either side shall be considered settled.
3. Ibn Shaalán shall withdraw his claim to the pastures of Homs and Hama.
4. The Sebáa will receive the Roála as *guests* in the Upper Desert, where there is room for all.

These very fair terms we have proposed this afternoon to Sotamm and the Akíd, supporting them with all the arguments we could command. I told Sotamm that a man in a great position, such as his, should give an example of wisdom to his people, and not be led away by the mere lust of glory, which makes fools of the common sort of men; that he must know that an aimless war like this, between two Ánazeh tribes, was ruinous to both of them; that the camels he seized to-day would be taken from him to-morrow, for the fortune of war was always turning; that the only people who really profited by such fighting were the Turks, the enemies of them all, and that he should know better than to play into the hands of Pashas and Mutesherifs. Sotamm assented to all this, admitted that the Turkish Government were primarily to blame in the quarrel, but maintained that the war must now go on. His people wished it and he could not con-

trol them. The Akíd was much more favourably disposed for peace. He is an old man and has seen many wars, and knows how little good and how little glory comes of them, but his business was not to decide such questions for the tribe, only to lead them when they chose to fight. As to the pashas it was impossible to do anything with them without presents, and the tribe wanted commercial advantages with the towns, which could only be procured by paying handsomely.

I. "And yet, if the Ánazeh were united, it would not be the sheykhs who would bring gifts to the pashas. Then, Sotamm, instead of sending mares to Hama, would himself receive pensions and robes of honour. It was by the quarrels among themselves that the Ánazeh lost their hold over the towns which used to pay them tribute, and now the Turks have it all their own way. They have not even to fight, for the Roála do that business for them."

Sotamm. "My people do not understand these things. They find it more profitable to be friends with the Government and do what the Pasha tells them."

I. "And that is, to make war with their brethren. You will be sorry for it some day, when the Turks drive you all back to Nejd the way you came."

Sotamm. "I can only do what my people wish. They want the plains of Hama for their camels, which have increased, thank God, and multiplied these last four years, so that the Hamád cannot any longer contain them."

I. "The Sebáa consent to receive you as guests in the Upper Desert. There is room there for all of you."

Sotamm. "Yes; but the Turks no not wish us to make peace."

This was the burden of his tale, and it is evident that he is too weak to lead or govern his people. The Akíd, however, has consented to argue the case with the principal sheykhs of the tribe, and they are now sitting in a circle on the ground about a hundred yards off, in council on the proposals.

Besides Sotamm and the Akíd, we have had a considerable circle of visitors off and on at our tent. Their principal talk was of the ghazú, which they consider a very successful one. They were only five days away altogether, and had eighty miles to march each way, the return journey being of course impeded by the captured camels they had to drive. It was certainly their camp fires Mohammed saw from the hill above Buseyri. We were surprised to hear that the Roála, powerful as they are, can only muster a thousand horsemen on an expedition of this sort. But they explained the matter by telling us, that now they managed their fighting in another way, which they found more effective. Instead of mares, most of them now ride delúls and take fire-arms with them, sitting two on each camel and back to back. This mounted infantry goes by the name of *seyman*, and of them four or five thousand can be mustered. Only a few, however, accompanied

this late ghazú, and these only in the capacity of scouts. The ten men with their delúls, crouched in the wady, whom Wilfrid came across the day we arrived at Jedáan's camp, were undoubtedly a party of them, sent on before to get news, and spy out the weak points of the Sebáa line. All the Jelás are here together now in the plain, a thing that does not happen once in twenty years,—all with the exception of five hundred tents under Tellál, a cousin of Sotamm's, who has quarrelled with the sheykh and stays behind near Jebel Shammar this year. The quarrel is, I believe, a domestic one, in which their wives are principally concerned. It is very difficult to get at the true number of the Roála tents, some saying five thousand and others twenty thousand. The Bedouins seem to have no idea of counting, and generally exaggerate, yet Wilfrid is of opinion that twenty thousand is nearer the mark. A hundred and fifty thousand seems to be a fair guess at the number of their camels. The thousand camels captured this week have been divided among those who took part in the ghazú, and may be distinguished by the fetters which they have on their forelegs to prevent their straying homewards. There are also in camp a great many black camels from the Nejd. These are smaller, scraggier, and give less milk than the common sort. They are held in less estimation.

Amongst others, Sotamm's little boy came, brought by his nurse, a very pretty child of four

years old, named Mansúr (Victorious), with plump rosy cheeks and a friendly disposition, not at all shy as the children here generally are. He walked across the tent all alone to give me a kiss. Hamid the Akíd has come back with Abd er Rahman to give us news of the council of war, for I fear it can hardly be hoped to be one of peace, though nothing has yet been settled. It appears that Sotamm has received a letter from Jevdet Pasha, the new Valy of Damascus, which he has got Abd er Rahman to read for him. It is a very curt epistle, forbidding the Roúla to go any further north this year than where they are. But it concludes with these words, "if you have anything to say to me on this score, I will see you at Damascus and listen patiently." This, Sotamm, and everyone else, take to be on the Pasha's part, "*sa manière de tirer une carotte.*" The new Valy, it is said, is "hungry," and must have his share. So Sotamm is making ready to go off to Damascus to-morrow with presents in his hand, and is more than ever determined to follow up his game with the Turks. I fear it is useless arguing further, even on the ground of personal danger to an Ibn Shaalán in Damascus, for Sotamm knows, or should know, that he runs no sort of risk there. It is only sheykhs of individual eminence who are in any danger. Later, Sotamm himself joined us, and we tried our last counsels. He listened very politely, and appealed almost pathetically to us to excuse him, if he could not do

all we wished. He had no quarrel with Jedáan though his wife had left him, and the Sebáa have suffered more than his own people in the war; but he must wait and see which way the Roála wished to go. At present they wished him to make this journey to Damascus. They could not stay where they were, for the grass was all eaten up, and they must cross the hills to-morrow towards Jerúd, while he would go with us straight to the town. He was really pathetic in his lamentation about the manner in which he is obliged to sacrifice his own interests to the wishes of his people. *He* must become poor, that they may grow rich; *he* must find mares and camels, to satisfy the hunger of the Osmanlis, that the Roála may trade freely with the townspeople and felláhin,—and soon he will be ruined. I have not much respect for Sotamm, but I cannot help liking and pitying him. He is only weak.

We have had a most sumptuous dinner this evening, and there is singing and dancing going on in our neighbourhood, in honour of some feast of circumcision.

April 15.—While the tents were being pulled down and the camels loaded, I had half-an-hour's conversation with Ghiówseh, Sotamm's first wife, the one with whom Jedáan's daughter has quarrelled. Fortunately, everybody but we two was busy, so we could talk without being interrupted by the busybodies, which generally surround one in the women's tent. Ghiówseh is pretty, slight and small

featured, and though very nice to me, looked as if she might have a temper of her own. She has more wits than most Arab women have, and can carry on a conversation further than is usual with them,—for they generally come to a dead stop when they have asked how far away my home is, and how many children I have had. Ghiówseh, on the contrary, showed an interest in hearing what I had to say about our travels and the people we had made acquaintance with in the desert. She was especially curious about the Shammar women, asking whether they were as pretty as people said, and whether they were well dressed and neat and clean. Sotamm is her first cousin, and she rules him with a rod of iron, not suffering any other woman to stay long in his tent. She has got rid of two that I know of, and seems determined to hold her ground, in which she will probably succeed as she is Mansúr's mother. The child was with her, and made himself very agreeable, begging his mother not to let me go away but to keep me with her. I gave him a little whistle, and plaited a bit of string for him to hang it by round his neck, and he was much delighted when I showed him how to blow it. He was not like most Arab children, who are always clawing at everything they can reach, and asking for sugar, but was quite well behaved and well mannered. Of course, however, he was very dirty, all the children being kept so by their mothers for fear of the evil eye. The tent at

last came down almost over our heads, and we had to get up, so I said good-bye, and Ghiówseh promised the child should not forget me.

The last thing loaded by Ibn Shaalán's people was the *uttfa*, a gigantic camel howda, used by the Róala whenever they expect a pitched battle, and then only. It is a huge cage of bamboo covered with ostrich feathers, and probably as old as the date of their first coming from Nejd, for ostriches are not found, I believe, north of Jebel Shammar. A delúl carries the *uttfa*, in which a girl is placed, whose business it is to sing during the fight, and encourage the combatants by her words.* She needs to be stout-hearted as well as stout-lunged, for the battle generally groups itself round her, in attack and defence. The Róala have a superstitious feeling about her defence, and the enemy a corresponding desire to capture her, for it is a belief that with the loss of the *uttfa* the Róala tribe would perish. Formerly, each large Bedouin tribe had one of these, but now, perhaps from a scarcity of ostrich feathers and the difficulty of renewing them, the *uttfa* and the custom attached to it have disappeared, except among the Róala and, I believe, the Ibn Haddal.† To-day it was carried empty on the back of a fine she-camel.

* This Uttfa figures in the fantastic description of the forty days' battle given by Fatalla Sayeghir, and justly ridiculed by Mr. Palgrave.

† Mr. Palgrave mentions its existence among the Ajman, a tribe east of Jebel Shammar.

We have sent our mares and donkeys for water to the hills which rise north of the plain, here called "Jebel Ruak," where there is a spring of excellent water, Bir Shédeh, and they have not yet returned, though all the Róala tents are down and the march begun. Sotamm out of politeness kept his own tent standing to the last, but now he cannot wait any longer, and has come to wish us good-bye. We are to meet him again to-night or to-morrow, but he has to see his tribe across the hills first, and will then join us on the road, and go with us to Damascus. I watched him riding away with a few followers, and four mares, and a delúl with her foal, which he is taking as gifts to the Pasha. The mares were nothing very remarkable. Now they are all gone.

It is a very curious feeling to perceive the plain gradually emptied of its inhabitants (we can still watch them streaming by half-a-dozen different passes up the hills), and to find all this tumultuous camp suddenly fallen into silence, and ourselves alone in the desert. Except the trampled pasture, there is not a trace of the people who are gone, for the Arabs leave nothing behind them, not even the scraps of paper one finds in Europe after a pic-nic. Only two camels, probably of those lately captured and too lame to go further, remain for the next person who likes to appropriate. One of them Ghanim is very anxious to drive off and sell at Damascus, but this Wilfrid will not allow.

Evening.—We did not get away till nearly ten, and have only travelled five hours, half of them, at least, through what was the Róala camp last night, so that the whole space occupied by the tribe cannot have been less than twelve miles across. It was not till we got clear of this, that the camels found any grass to eat, and we then let them feed as they went, for they have had little the last twenty-four hours. As we followed along the foot of the Ruak hills, a white cloud gradually appeared over the horizon in front of us and, as it took shape, became transformed into a mountain. It was the snow-covered head of Mount Hermon, our first sight of the promised land. Then we knew that Damascus must be straight before us, and not far off.

We have stopped under shelter of a ruined khan, the first sign of approaching civilization; and there, in a bed of thick rich grass, we are spending a happy afternoon, having seen our last of the Bedouins. This will be our last night in the desert, and we must make the most of it. There are some curious volcanic mounds close by, differing from any we have hitherto seen,—outlying specimens, perhaps, of the tells of the Leja. On one of them Wilfrid has shot a hare, and we are to have a feast to-night to celebrate Mohammed's promotion to the rank of brotherhood, with which it has been determined to reward him for his tried fidelity and loyal service. We have long debated whether he was worthy of the honour; for the brotherhood is not a thing to be

lightly undertaken, or undertaken at all, except with men of a certain distinction, and Mohammed's position as a Tudmúri seemed at first to put him altogether out of the category of eligible persons. It is, however, a time-honoured practice, even with the greatest desert sheykhs, to take the oath with the sheykhs of towns, and Mohammed's birth as eldest son and heir apparent to the sheykhdom of Tudmur has to be considered, while his descent from the Beni Láam and the prophet Taleb raise him altogether above the common herd of village felláhin. As a final test, and to prove whether he was wholly worthy, Mr. S. had been deputed to-day to tempt him with money, a crucial test indeed with Bedouin and citizen alike in Arabia, and he had come out of it unscathed. The choice was given him whether, in reward of his services, he should be sent home to Tudmur with a handsome sum in mejidies, or as the friend and brother of the Beg. Mohammed did not hesitate, but emphatically exclaimed, "If the Beg were to fill my kefíyeh with white pieces, yet I would hold it as nothing to the honour of being his brother." So, then, it has been settled, and the oath taken in our presence, and to-night Mohammed for the first time will sit down and eat with us in our tent. In taking the oath, he added to the usual phrases one new to us, "*lel akhir min yómi*" ("to the last of my days"). He seems duly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.

Sotamm has not made his appearance, and we do not expect now to meet him, till we get to Damascus.

April 16.—The weather has broken up, but no matter. We are just at the end of our journey. In the night I saw a fine lunar rainbow, the moon shining against a heavy shower. The whole bow was visible, but the colours were indistinct.

Soon after starting, we passed a small outlying Róala camp, but without alighting. Two of the horsemen belonging to it joined our party and rode a mile or two with us, but we could get no information from them, as the younger was shy, and the elder had an impediment in his speech, which made him impossible to understand. Then we parted company, they passing over hills to the right to join the main body of Róala at Jerúd, we keeping straight towards Mount Hermon, or Jebel-esh-Sheykh, as it is called. At ten o'clock we reached the first cultivated fields and some fine Greek ruins, and, a little further on, a plentiful spring of living water, such as we had not seen for weeks. It seemed unnatural, if not impossible to find so much water starting out of the ground. Immediately afterwards the village of Duméyr was reached, the furthest outpost of civilization towards the desert. It is a flourishing place, surrounded with gardens and fields of corn. Countrymen with pale faces and wearing turbans appeared, riding donkeys instead of camels, and answering our salutations, in

what sounded to our ears an affected lisp, with the Syrian "*marahábba.*" We were once more within the pale of Ottoman law, that half-way house between desert freedom and the chains of Europe. Lastly, we met a man in Frankish clothes, with rings on his fingers and speaking French, who told us he was dragoman to a foreign Consulate. We hardly knew with what face to look at him, so bare and bald and skimpily clothed he seemed.

* * * * * * *

The next morning we rode into Damascus.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Their shape was very singular and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a thicket to observe them better."—*A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms.*—SWIFT.

Last Words—The Camel defended—Sotamm in town—Farewells—A party of Yahoos.

A FEW words now will complete my story. We were a week at Damascus, waiting for money to carry us home, for we had spent nearly all we had, and depended on the sale of our camels to make up the sum required. Ferhán and Mohammed between them arranged this admirably, and we found ourselves, in a few days, with a clear profit of fifteen shillings on each beast that we had purchased at Bagdad. Tamarisk, too, was disposed of with but trifling loss, and the other three mares were left with Mr. S. for embarkation later on for England. The white donkey realised precisely the sum she had cost us, £16, at starting, and well worth the money she was to her new purchaser. It was not till quite at the end of the journey, that she had shown signs of fatigue, and then only under the aggravation of eighteen stone on her back. During the whole march she had not tripped once or stumbled.

We shed a tear or two at parting with our

camels, such tears as people shed who dismiss good servants on reducing their establishment. These honest animals had done everything required of them without complaining, I had almost said without a word. It makes me angry, remembering the docile affectionate beasts they were, to read such rubbish as travellers write about the evil disposition of their race. A certain writer, for instance, who ought to know better, devotes a page or two of his book on Arabia to an essay on the wickedness of the camel's heart, which to one who has had experience of the real creature, unbrutalised by "hard blows" and "downright kicks," is strange to understand. The camel, whatever his faults, is certainly not ill-tempered, and his roaring is as little terrible to any but cockney ears as the lowing of a cow. Roaring is his manner of speech, and need frighten no one. The fact is, the camel alarmed, or overloaded, or overworked, appeals in this way for mercy to his owner, and, if the traveller, annoyed by the noise, will look under the saddle before mounting, he will generally find there just cause for the loud complaints his poor beast makes. A young unbroken camel roars from terror, so does one wounded by the saddle. Many a time I have been made aware by my camel's voice, or by the mute appeal of his face turned to me and nudging my elbow, that the saddle required re-stuffing, and more than once that it was time to dismount if I did not wish to risk a fall. Was there ill-temper or

want of sense in this? Much as I love horses, I hold them on both these points below the camel.

Let anyone, who doubts this, take camels and horses on a journey and see how each will act. The horse, if not restrained by his rider, will begin the day with a frolic, heels in air, and end it in a shambling jog, stumbling and wearied out. If carefully ridden, however, he will last through the day, and come in hungry at night, and hunger is what the traveller loves best to see in his beast; so he turns him loose to feed. Not at all! Bucephalus has seen a rival, and with a snort and a scream he is at him hoof and tooth. The grass may be sweet, but fighting is sweeter; and, unless his master intervene, there is little chance of his being fit for another day's journey. At some risk he is seized and bound, tethered we will say to a stout peg, and before morning, if he have not broken loose, he will be found inextricably entangled in his halter, starving because he cannot get at the grass, and with the rug, given him by his master, to keep him warm, dislodged by his attempts to roll, and hanging from the surcingle. His master comes to feed him, and spreads his cloak upon the ground, and heaps up corn before him. The horse takes a mouthful, turning round the while to bite his flank, and scattering half upon the ground. Then in another instant he has pawed the heap into mire beneath his hoofs.

Meanwhile, the "stupid, ill-tempered" camel,

husbanding his power, has marched all day, keeping at a uniform pace like a trained pedestrian, mile after mile, hour after hour; and, the journey ended, he walks off to feed. He knows time's value, and loses not an instant, careful only to keep his fellows in sight, and listening for his master's call. At dusk he stops and, turning his head at a sudden flash, sees the camp fire lighted, and knows that it is time for bed. He slowly makes his way to camp, kneels down of his own accord to receive his portion of beans, or his ball of cotton seed, and chews the cud without moving till morning. Which of these two creatures has shown the greater sense during the day? Which the most temper? But enough. I have lost my own.

After these mute partings, farewells more solemn had to be made. Hánna, Ferhán, Ghanim, Mohammed, and Mr. S., each in his turn, and in his degree, cost us a pang. Ghanim was the first to go. At Damascus he was evidently out of place, and the very first day got into trouble there, and was disarmed by the police of a certain iron mace it had been his pride to carry. This disgusted the boy, and he took the opportunity to leave us, ingratiating himself with his legitimate chieftain, by singing songs to him in honour of the Roála war. There, under the name of Bender (for he thought it becoming, like Abram, on so great an occasion to change his name), and clothed in a fine abba and kefíyeh, the proceeds of our bakshish, he strutted about the

town—the vain, unstable, interesting creature he had always been—and disappeared at last with his new master. Hánna was made happy with cooking-pots and pans to his heart's content, besides receiving double pay for all the months he had been in our service. He wept copiously for the last few days preceding our departure, and in a perfect torrent of tears when the day itself came. Ferhán was less demonstrative, yet every bit as sincere. He was the only one of our servants who asked for nothing but his wages, and who took all that was given him over and above, as a gift from heaven. He did not count his money, but affirmed that he would follow us to the world's end, and I believe him.

Mohammed, as agreed, recived no pay, but was rewarded with the rifle and with sundry small articles he had not the strength of mind to help asking for. To the last he remained the same good humoured intelligent fellow we had always found him, and, now he has become "the Beg's brother," I believe he would follow our fortunes to the end of the world. He has promised to go with us next winter to the Jôf, where we are to help him in the choice of a new wife from his own people, the Beni Láam, a girl of noble blood, and one worthy to marry a descendant of the prophet Taleb. Abd er Rahman, who though not our servant had served us in divers ways during the last fortnight, received a servant's reward. Money, he had learnt by long experience, was a more substantial blessing than

glory, and he had laughed, in his quiet way, not a little at Mohammed's romantic choice. But we remembered that he was but an Úlema of Aleppo, and the son of a horse dealer, and we do not withdraw our esteem from him on that account.

Sotamm came more than once to visit us in the garden, where we were encamped at Damascus, and seemed pleased, poor man, to sit down at the door even of our European tent. He felt that we were in some sense Bedouins like himself. Each time we found him paler and more dejected, for the Bedouins languish quickly in town air, and at last he suddenly went back to the desert. At the time, we could learn nothing of his interview with the Valy, for he was always accompanied and closely watched by an official, and therefore reserved with us, and we, having done our duty in the cause of peace, pressed him no further. But we know now that he went back without his mares to the tribe, and that the difficulty as to the march of the Roála northwards was satisfactorily removed. Quite lately news has reached us that Sotamm is once more in the old quarters of the Sebáa, the pastures of Homs and Hama, and that he is supported there by the Government. So I fear we must consider that our diplomatic mission failed. Whether the Sebáa will sit down under their loss of territory, or whether new raids and fights will follow we do not yet know, but I intend perhaps to add a postscript to my last chapter, with the "latest news" of the Desert.

Of our journey home it will be unnecessary to say anything, for, from the day of our arrival at Damascus, we felt that its interest for us had ceased, and that the rest was only an annoying delay. We got over our first meeting with our countrymen with as good a face as we could command, but we own it shocked us. We were not prepared for the vast change a winter spent among the Arabs would make in our tastes, our prejudices and our opinions. It was at Beyrout that we met the first wave of European life. We had found the inn there deserted, and had dined in peace, sitting, it is true, at a table instead of on the floor, drinking our water out of glasses, and eating with knives and forks instead of with our fingers, but hitherto there had been nothing to excite our surprise or shock our feelings. As we were sitting, however, on a divan at the end of the dining-room, drinking our coffee in all the solemnity of Asiatic repose, a sudden noise of voices and loud laughter resounded through the house, and presently the door burst open, and a tumultuous throng of men and women clad in trousers and coats, or in scanty skirts and jackets, according to their sex, but all with heads uncovered, and looking strangely naked, rushed across the floor. There may have been a dozen of them in all. Their faces were flushed and excited, as if they had been drinking wine; and they passed in front of us without pause or salute to the upper end of the room, and there, with no further cere-

mony, flung themselves each into his chair. The dresses, voices, gestures and attitudes of these men and women struck us as not only the most grotesque, but the most indecorous we had ever seen. The women were decked out in the most tawdry and unseemly manner, and one girl among them had a quantity of golden hair hanging quite loosely down her back. Some of the men were close shaven on the chin, and others wore spectacles. They threw themselves, as I have said, in the grotesquest attitudes into their chairs, and at once began chaffering with a scoundrel crew of Jew pedlars who had followed them in, and who, while exhibiting their trumpery wares, cast evident eyes of contempt, even they, on the undignified strangers. The conversation, which I am ashamed to repeat, was conducted partly in English, partly in *lingua Franca*, and consisted principally of insults addressed to the pedlars, varied with cajoleries yet baser and more odious. The objects chaffered for were sham Oriental weapons, sham turquoise ornaments and fir-cones from the Lebanon. Wilfrid beckoned a servant, and inquired of him what manner of people these were that had been admitted to the house. "Cook's tourists," we thought. "Their manners are proverbial, and perhaps they have been dining out." "Oh no," replied the man; "these travellers are English milords of distinction. They arrived last night in a yacht from Malta." Yes, these were the "asil" of our

own countrymen. I am glad Mohammed did not see them.

Our journey is over, and we are once more in England, with no more tangible record of our winter's adventures, and of the friends we made in the desert, than Meshúr's pistols hung up over the chimney-piece of the hall, and half-a-dozen Arabian mares grazing in the park outside. Sherífa is one of them, with a pretty bay colt at her heels, while Hagar seems to enjoy galloping and jumping hurdles on English ground. Mohammed's *sára hajar*, the stone head from Palmyra, lies on a table among whips and umbrellas, the nucleus of a collection of antiques, and letters have arrived from Aleppo announcing the great news of the day, the alliance of Jedáan and Faris.

All is finished but the last few serious chapters, with which Wilfrid proposes to end this book for me. In them the information we picked up during our travels will be embodied, and, though he says they will probably be dull, I trust they may not be without practical value.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"A greater part of the earth hath ever been peopled than hath been known or described by geographers."—Sir Thomas Browne.

Geography of Northern Arabia—Physical features of the Desert—Migrations of its tribes — The Euphrates valley — Desert villages—Some hints for map-makers.

Arabia is usually represented on our maps as being bounded to the north by a curved line, starting from the head of the Persian Gulf and ending at the Gulf of Akaba. Its vertex is placed by most geographers in latitude 34°, or a few miles south of the ancient city of Palmyra. This, in the days of the Roman empire, no doubt represented pretty accurately the limits of fixed authority southwards towards the Peninsula. The line of the Euphrates was at that time guarded, and a military high road connected the river with the hills above Damascus, shutting out the Bedouin tribes of Arabia from the pastures of Mesopotamia and of the upper "Syrian Desert." Within the limits thus traced, settled life was secure against marauders, and the common law of the empire prevailed. But it is many centuries now since the Euphrates ceased to be the real boundary of Arabia, or the high road passing

through Palmyra a barrier to its tribes. It is time, therefore, that the imaginary line traced by ancient geographers should disappear from our maps.

Northern Arabia at the present day embraces the whole district between Syria and Persia, and extends northwards as far as latitude 37°, the latitude of Orfa and Mardin. Mesopotamia, Irak, and the plains north of Palmyra, are now in every respect part of Arabia, forming, with the Hamád, a singularly homogeneous whole, uniform in its physical features and in the race which inhabits it. The Shammar, the Ánazeh, and the Montefik tribes are as purely Arabian as their kinsmen of Nejd, and the villagers of the Euphrates and the Jôf as those of the Hejaz and Yemen. It is probable, indeed, that the great camel-owning tribes of the Northern Deserts represent the ancient civilization of Arabia far more closely than do the Mussulman population of the south, and are more nearly connected in thought and manners with the patriarchs of primæval history, from whom both claim to descend. Be this as it may, Arabia has no other limits now than those of the desert.

The physical features of the desert are those of a vast plain, or succession of plains and plateaux, so poor in soil and so scantily watered, that no cultivation is possible within its limits except by irrigation.

Its surface has at one time been, in all likelihood, the bed of an inland sea, for the surface soil is still composed in part of a layer of shingle, in part of

a sandy loam covering the substratum of chalk or conglomerate.

Roughly speaking, the district is without mountains, streams or fresh-water lakes, for the two great rivers which cross its north-eastern angle neither affect nor are affected by the country they traverse. They cut through the plain, as it were, like strangers, and have nothing in common with the desert above them. The only considerable chain of hills is that which connects Damascus with Mosul, and which, under the successive names of Jebel Ruák, Jebel Amúr, Jebel Abd ul Aziz, and Jebel Sinjár, forms a continuous line at right angles to the Euphrates. This line marks the difference of level in the plains north and south of it, with a corresponding diversity of vegetation. Above the hills, permanent sheep pasture is found; below them, camel pasture only.

It is strange that modern map-makers, and especially the German, should in their anxiety to improve on ancient models have abandoned so marked a natural feature as this range of hills, which the older geographers were careful to give; and it is a poor exchange to find in its stead, the old blank spaces of the desert filled up with new landmarks either wholly imaginary or out of all proportion to their real value. There is nothing more irritating to the traveller, endeavouring to make his way across the desert by the help of one of these German maps, than to find a number of

insignificant tells and wadys figuring on it as hills and watercourses,—and this for no better purpose than that the map should look more maplike to the eyes of the engraver.

I have traced one or two of these *improvements* to their source. Thus, in 1872, a Prussian lieutenant, named Thielman, crosses the Hamád from Bagdad to Damascus, and, being a conscientious officer, notes down all that he sees on his way. He observes, amongst other things, a certain range of hills (the broken edge, most probably, of a plateau or table-land), and he asks his guide "What is that?" "El berríye," answers the Agheyl, "the desert," meaning thereby that he sees nothing he recognises; and in the next edition of Kiepert's Hand Atlas, *Jebel el Berrie* appears as a mountain chain. In another map, Jebel Ruák figures as a single peak; and in a third, Tudmur stands in a valley. The fact is that, with the exception of the Euphrates, which was surveyed by Colonel Chesney forty years ago, no part of Northern Arabia has yet been professionally examined. Map-makers, then, would do well to imitate Mr. Stanford, who, in default of reliable information from modern travellers, sticks courageously by the old traditions. His map looks bare but is accurate, and is the only one we have found of any use.

But to resume: The physical features of the desert are those of a plain clothed with aromatic shrubs, stunted but woody, of which wild lavender

is a good type. The varieties of these are numerous, but their value as pasture is very unequal, some being excellent for camels, others for sheep, and not a few being absolutely worthless. On the better soils, too, after rain many kinds of grasses and flowering plants are found, while in the Northern parts of Mesopotamia and the Upper "Syrian" Desert the country is not very different to look at in spring-time from the great rolling downs of Wiltshire, where these have not been ploughed up. Only the resemblance is superficial, for there is no permanent turf in any part of the desert. It is in these upper plains that the Bedouins congregate in the spring, shear their flocks, and hold commercial intercourse with the towns; for here, even during the extreme heats of summer, sufficient pasture of one sort or other is found for their cattle. When in June the grass "turns white" and is withered, new leaves appear on the wild lavender and its kindred shrubs; and the first autumn rains bring back a fresh growth of greener food. Nor is water ever wanting. In seasons of great drought the Euphrates and Tigris valleys are always open, and then receive the whole population, whose camels find pasture in the great tamarisk beds fringing the rivers.

With the first frosts the Ánazeh move southwards, and by December not a camel is to be found north of the hill range. The reason of this is not entirely nor directly due to the cold. Camels will

stand a vast amount of hard weather, but as soon as the shrubs lose their leaves, not being close feeders like the sheep, they find no pasture suited to them, and wander southwards to latitudes where the shrubs are evergreen. The tribes, residing all the year round north of the hills, keep only sheep. The camel-owning Bedouins are perpetually on the move, the Ánazeh wandering as far south in winter as to within a few days' march of Jebel Shammar, which geographers generally place in latitude 28°. They have, then, an extreme range of some ten degrees, and in exceptional years may travel two thousand miles between November and May.

The calving time for camels is in February and early March, when the Ánazeh are at the extreme southern limit of their wanderings, so that the milch animals have the advantage of feeding on certain succulent bushes of which the *ghárkudd* or, as Mr. Palgrave writes it, the *ghada* is the most esteemed. It is a thorny tree growing perhaps five feet high, with a reddish stem and green fleshy leaves, reminding one, by its way of growing, a little of dogwood. Immediately, however, after the calving has begun the tribes move again towards the north, travelling from eight to ten miles daily, and keeping pace pretty closely with the growth of the grass, camomile, and other plants their camels love. Their rate of marching never exceeds two miles in the hour, the pace of the youngest camel.

At this time of year, if the season is a favourable

one, the Hamád is one of the most beautiful sights in the world, a vast undulating plain of grass and flowers. The purple stock which predominates on the better soils gives its colour to the whole country, and on it the camels feed, preferring it to all other food. The hollows are filled with the richest meadow grass, wild barley, wild oats and wild rye, the haunts of quails, while here and there deep beds of blue geranium (bohátttery) take their place, or tracts white with camomiles. On the poorer soils the flowers are not less gay; tulips, marigolds, asters, irises and certain pink wallflowers, the most beautiful of all, cousins each of them to our garden plants. For it was from the desert doubtless that the Crusaders brought us many of those we now consider essentially English flowers. Through this, as through a garden, the vast herds of camels with their attendant Bedouins move slowly all the spring, and the mares, starved during eight months of the year, foal and grow fat upon a certain crisp grass which grows amongst the purple stock, fine and dry and sweet as sugar. No sheep accompany these southern journeys. Those that belong to the Anazeh are left behind in the upper plains with the Weldi Aghedaat and other tributary tribes, who keep them till their owners return. Sheep require constant watering, and in the Hamád wells are scarce. As soon as calving has commenced milk is plentiful in the camps, and water is little thought of even for the mares, who will go many days with nothing but

this to drink. There are however wells in certain places, and in others pools of rain water more or less abundant according to the season. Their position is well known to the tribes. By the middle of April the sun begins to show its power, the pools are exhausted, the grass has grown yellow and shed its seed, and all this wealth of pasture disappears. Then the tribes cross the hills, rejoin their flocks and enter into treaties with the towns. Shearing begins in May, and the three year old colts and camels find purchasers, and the year goes round again.

Such is the physical aspect of the desert. There remains to be described that of the two great rivers which traverse it, and which introduce two new features strange to Arabia, running water and trees.* The valleys are so nearly similar that a description of one, the Euphrates, will suffice for both. The Euphrates when it appears at the edge of the desert is already a full grown river, as large as the Danube at Belgrade, and flowing at the rate of four and a half miles an hour. Its waters are turbid, but sweet and pure as the water of the Nile. Like the Nile too they have a certain fertilising quality in

* To say that trees are strange to Arabia is not perhaps quite accurate, for the acacia and the "betún" are found there in the wild state, and the date palm of course is numerous wherever there is or has been a village. But they are sufficently rare for the generic word séjjereh to be almost always understood of fruit trees. A tree in common parlance, unless further explained, means a palm tree or a fig, an apricot or a pomegranate tree.

irrigation, superior to that of most rivers, and leave a deposit of good mould where they have passed. In early times and till within the last five hundred years the Upper Euphrates Valley was a rich agricultural district, supporting its rural population as well as the commercial inhabitants of its numerous wealthy towns. For two centuries however no plough, it may almost be said, has turned a furrow on its shores. The fields have lain fallow, and have been pastured by the Bedouins, and the lower lands within reach of the annual inundation have become one large jungle of tamarisk.

Further down, the river changes its aspect, the valley grows narrow, and groves of palm trees take the place of tamarisk beds, while the desert comes down to the very water's edge. Here villages are found, reduced no doubt from their ancient importance, but still occupying the sites they held in Biblical days:—Uz, the city where Job dwelt, Hitt and Jebbeh the home of the Hittites and Jebusites, and others perhaps less easy to recognise, but of as great antiquity. Hitherto, the river has cut its way as if by violence through the surrounding country, flowing through a valley which it has scooped out for itself two hundred or three hundred feet below the level of the plain, and having as little natural connection with it as a railway traversing an agricultural district in England. It receives nothing from the neighbouring lands in the way of tributaries, nor does it give anything out of its own

valley in irrigation. Its way of life is not that of the desert. It carries with it its own vegetation, its own birds, and its own beasts. If the gazelle creeps down to drink at its waters in summer it is by night, and she soon leaves the valley. The sandgrouse fly over it but hardly stop, and only the little desert partridge seems common to both sides of the cliff. On the other hand its lions and wolves and jackals rarely leave the valley, and its wild boars keep close within the tamarisk beds. Its birds are those of Europe or of Asia Minor, the partridge, the francolin, the magpie, ducks, geese, snipes, woodcocks. All these abound by the river, but are never found even a mile beyond its precincts.

Lastly, there is more than the usual differences which varied occupation gives, between the men of the valley and the men of the desert. These last rarely descend to the river except in the seasons of great drought, or when bent on crossing it to make a foray on the opposite shore. The pasturage of the upper plain is better suited to their camels than is that of the richer valley, and during great part of the year, though they are encamped within easy reach of it, the river is to them as if it was not there. There are hundreds of the Ánazeh who have never seen the Euphrates. On the other hand the felláh tribes, with their horned cattle and their attempts at cultivation, stick closely to the valley, while the citizens even of such purely desert towns

as Deyr and Ana speak with terror and almost under their breath of the *Chôl.*

The Euphrates was so accurately surveyed by Colonel Chesney, that nothing is wanted by the modern traveller beyond a revision of the names of places. These, if they were ever correctly given, have now nearly all been altered, and since the Turkish occupation of the valley new places of importance, military or otherwise, have sprung up requiring notice on the map. The Tigris survey is far less accurate, but for that Colonel Chesney was not responsible, while his map of the desert is entirely useless. He places Tudmur fifty miles south, and El Haddr thirty miles west of their real positions.

Except on the line of the two rivers Northern Arabia possesses nothing which can be called a town, and only a few villages which are in fact oases. In the south these are surrounded by palmgroves; in the north by gardens or open fields of corn, whose acreage is dependent exactly on the amount of water applicable to irrigation. Those described by Mr. Palgrave as existing in the Jôf seem to be fairly flourishing, but further north there is nothing till we come to the line of hills dividing the upper from the lower plains. Along the foot of these a few miserable villages are scattered, occupying the site each one of a scanty spring, and owning from fifty to a hundred acres of irrigable land. These are usually surrounded by a mud wall, pierced with

a single gateway, and the houses inside built equally of mud are low and flat roofed. They may contain populations of from two hundred to five hundred persons each, and are the most wretched places that can well be conceived. The neighbourhood of a desert village is always bare and pastureless, having been trodden down and grazed over mercilessly for generations. The principal of these are Karyeteyn and Tudmur, west of the Euphrates, and the Sinjár villages east of it. I have marked their positions on my map as Stanford gives them, for his geography is fairly accurate. The Upper Desert with the hills contains in all about a dozen of these small places, and the Sinjár country as many more.

On the rivers there is the same diversity of appearance between the villages of the north and those of the south. The latter surrounded with date palms have a prosperous, the former drag on a miserable existence. The reason of this may be found in the fact that the Bedouin seldom or never interferes with date cultivation. The land occupied by palm groves is unsuitable for pasturage, and he does not grudge it to its owners, whereas the open fields of wheat and barley are a continual temptation for his flocks. Thus it is that while Ana and the palm villages have only suffered from loss of trade, the towns of the Upper Euphrates have been utterly ruined. North of latitude 34° the rich valley of the Euphrates can boast no more than half-a-dozen

villages * maintaining a sort of death in life, and it is only within the last few years that a little cultivation has been once more attempted under Turkish protection. Deyr, the only remaining village at the date of the Turkish occupation in 1862, owed its existence to the position of its cornfields on an island protected by the river. Of Bussra and the riverine villages below Bagdad I will say nothing, as I have not visited them. They are besides well known. The holy cities of Kerbela and Meshid Ali are fairly flourishing places, and the right bank of the Shatt el Arab, occupied by the Montefik tribe has been described to me as the best cultivated region of the whole valley. There are also a few small oases west of the Euphrates, the chief of which, Kubéza and Shedadi, are markets much frequented by the Bedouins.

As regards our own travels, I fear we have been able to add little to the general stock of knowledge on geographical matters. The ancient Greek city of El Haddr, although little known to Europeans, has already been described by Mr. Ainsworth who saw it about 1840, and it has since been visited more than once by Mr. Layard, and by at least one other English traveller. Our route across Mesopotamia I believe to be a new one, and the Sneyzele and Ommuthsiábeh lakes will now be marked for the first time on any map. We have ascertained too that

* I do not of course mean here to include in the term "Upper Euphrates" any part of the river beyond the limits of the desert.

there is no branch of the Khabur called the Sinjár, nor indeed any such branch at all. So that should disappear from the maps. The southern waters from the Sinjár hills terminate all in the Subkhas or salt lakes. In the Hamád, beyond fixing the position of the Jebel Ghoráb, which I see on Kiepert's map seventy miles south west of its actual position, and ascertaining the existence of a line of fresh-water pools supplied by rain each winter between the Ghóta, near Damascus and the Euphrates we have done nothing of any value. The routes between Palmyra and Damascus are too well-known to need other remark than that the Jebel Ruák is no separate peak, as some make out, but a name given to the southernmost ridge of the main chain of hills, and that the plain of Saighal contains a large fresh-water lake. I have marked, however, the position of certain springs and wells for the use of future travellers. I fear none of this will allow us to claim a R. G. S.'s medal.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Desert History—The Shammar and Ánazeh invasions—Destruction of civilisation in the Euphrates Valley—Reconquest by the Turks—Their present position in Arabia—List of the Bedouin Tribes—An account of the Sabæans.

THE modern history of Northern Arabia may be considered as commencing with the conquest of that country by the Shammar Bedouins of Nejd, under their leader Faris, about two hundred years ago.

Until that time the Ottoman Empire, inheriting the traditions of its predecessors Roman, Greek, Saracen and Tartar, had maintained its southern frontier at the line of the Euphrates and the military highroad connecting Bagdad with Damascus. Within this limit, the inhabitants of the desert were the Sultan's subjects, and the common law of the Empire prevailed. Mesopotamia and the Upper Syrian Desert were at that time inhabited by various shepherd tribes, some of them Arabs of the first invasion under the Caliph Omar, others of Kurdish origin, pushed forward by the counter invasions from the north in the 13th and 14th centuries, and one of mixed race, the Moáli, which owes it existence according to tradition to the following curious accident.

In the days of the Damascus Caliphate, a certain son of the Caliph was sent on an embassy to the court of Justinian the second at Constantinople, and attracted there the notice of the Empress Theodora, who honoured him with her affection to the extent that, when he left her court, she determined to give him an independent position in his own country. She sent him away therefore with substantial presents and a large number of male and female slaves, enabling him to found the tribe which has been ever since known as the Moáli or *property* tribe. As evidence of the truth of this story, it is certain that the Bedouins of pure race look down on the rank and file of the Moáli, while they hold in high honour the family of its sheykhs, giving them the title of Beg, otherwise unknown in the desert.*

These Moáli occupied the right bank of the Euphrates, and the Taï, a pure Arab race, the upper plains of Mesopotamia, while, subject to them, were the Weldi, the Aghedaat, the Jiburi, and the Haddadin, whose descendants still exist in reduced circumstances along the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris. The valleys themselves, though already partially ruined by the Tartar and Ottoman conquests, were still agricultural districts, and through them the trade with India passed. Benjamin of Tudela, our only authority as to their condition in the Middle Ages, describes them as containing

* Niebuhr gives El Bushir as the family name of the Moáli Sheykhs.

numerous flourishing towns, of which Jáber and Ráhaba on the Euphrates alone, had in his day a population, besides their other inhabitants, of four thousand Jews, while Tudmur had two thousand, El Haddr, fifteen thousand, and Okbera on the Tigris, ten thousand. Most of these cities have now entirely disappeared. What their exact condition may have been five centuries later we have no record to inform us, but it seems certain that their final overthrow dates only from the Shammar conquest. This occurred in the middle of the 17th century.

Almost exactly two hundred years ago, Sultan Mahomet IV. being then engaged with the siege of Vienna, the southern frontier of his empire was overrun by these Bedouins, who had already marched up from the Nejd and occupied the Hamád. They found the frontier unguarded, took and destroyed the city of Tudmur, and broke up the line of its desert communications with Bagdad and Damascus. They then crossed the hills, defeated the Moáli, the most warlike of the tribes of the Upper Desert, and reduced the lesser ones to submission. The valley of the Euphrates was next swept clear by them, and the towns made tributary to themselves instead of to the Sultan. The last vestiges of cultivation disappeared from the right bank of the river, and Bedouin law became supreme as far north as Bir esh Sheykh. During twenty years, however, so the Arabs say, the Moáli carried on the war for their

pasturage and, though ultimately ruined, managed at one time to gain considerable advantages. On the pretext of a conference they inveigled the Shammar chiefs to their tents, and while they were eating slew them there. This great crime is still remembered throughout the desert in the saying "*Beyt el Moáli beyt el Aïb.*" ("The tent of the Moáli is the tent of shame.")

Nevertheless, at the end of twenty years the Shammar conquest was complete, and the Moáli were reduced to the last extremity; but then a new invader appeared upon the scene, and at once turned the fortune of the war. This was the Ánazeh, another tribe of the Nejd, who, hearing the report of the rich pastures acquired by their predecessors, had come to share in the spoils. The Moáli sided at once with the new comers, and together they drove the Shammar across the Euphrates. These, finding in Mesopotamia a still richer land before them than what they had lost, abandoned the "Syrian" desert to the Ánazeh, subdued the Taï, and eventually crossing the Tigris carried their raids to Mósul and the Persian frontier. The towns on the Tigris were treated as those on the Euphrates had been, and even Bagdad itself was threatened.

It is strange that during the progress of these startling events the Ottoman Government seems to have looked on in apathy, and made no effort to control the invaders. The Pashas of Mósul and Bagdad contented themselves with mending the walls of

their cities and waiting patiently for events. The commerce of the desert ceased entirely, and caravans, abandoning the old direct routes, now followed the long road which passes outside the desert through Mardin and Orfa, and did so in fear and trembling. Meanwhile the Montefik, and the Beni Laam, had occupied Iráḳ; and the whole country between Syria and Persia, a few isolated towns excepted, became a portion of independent Arabia. This state of things continued unchanged down to our own day.

The fortunes of the Bedouin tribes are continually changing in the desert. A succession of lucky breeding seasons for their camels brings wealth, and the courage or wisdom of a Sheykh importance to a tribe, so that one year it may be this, and another that tribe which appears in the ascendant. But the general superiority of the Shammár and Ánazeh over the minor tribes has never been called in question since they first appeared in Northern Arabia. The Ánazeh have it all their own way in the Hamád, and as far north as Aleppo, and the Shammar are supreme in Mesopotamia. The war which began between them so long ago has gone on ever since, not always actively, for there have been seasons of truce; but peace has never been made between them, and raids of Ánazeh into the Shammar country, and of Shammar into the Ánazeh may be counted on with as much certainty every summer as the appearance of swallows in May. Both tribes

as far as one can guess their history, have had their ups and downs. The Shammar have been strong enough within the memory of people yet living to threaten Bagdad with sack; and if any credence can be placed in "Fatalla's" recital, Ibn Shaalán of the Roala Ánazeh invaded Persia not seventy years ago. It is of course impossible to give anything like an account of their fortunes and downfalls. The Ánazeh have long ceased to be a united tribe, if they ever were one, and this has saved the Shammar, who are far less numerous, from destruction. Still, on the whole, fortune seems to have been against the latter, as may be guessed from the inferiority of the horses they now possess, nothing in desert life so clearly proving good fortune in war as the presence of a large number of fine mares in the camp of a tribe.

With regard to the Ánazeh conquest, it is certain that only a portion of the tribes now found in the Upper Desert accompanied the first invasion. As far as I can learn, the earliest invaders were the Fedáan and the Hesénneh, then, and till quite recently the most important, if not the most numerous, of the tribes. The Ibn Haddal, Sebáa and Welled Ali came next. Then at a long interval the Roála, who appeared for the first time in the latitude of Damascus about the end of last century, while the Towf and Erfuddi only left Nejd so lately as twenty years ago.

Such, according to tradition, has been the history

of Northern Arabia for nearly two hundred years. A new era, however, has now quite recently been begun; and within the last sixteen years the Turkish Government has recovered a part, at least, of the territory lost so long to the Empire. In 1862, the heyday of reform and activity in Turkey, when, after the Crimean war, ended some time before, the Porte found itself in possession of a large army and plenty of money, Omar Pasha, then Governor of Aleppo, at the head of a considerable number of troops marched down the valley of the Euphrates and took military possession of Jaber and Deyr, the only two inhabited villages then existing on the Upper Euphrates. Deyr was at that time inhabited by certain felláhin Arabs, partly descended from the original founders of the town in the days of the caliphate,* partly recruited from Mósul and Orfa, who, having long enjoyed a semi-independence under Ánazeh protection, resented the interference of the Turks, and defended their town stoutly. But Omar Pasha had brought artillery with him, and took the place by storm, and this was all the resistance he met with. A garrison was placed in Deyr, and guard-houses were built at intervals between it and Aleppo. Deyr became a Pashalic under the Valy of Aleppo, and the Upper Valley of the Euphrates was declared to be once more part of the Empire. The Ánazeh seem to have contented

* Deyr must be older than the Mussulman era, for its name, signifying "convent," points to a Christian origin.

themselves with plundering the caravans which now began to pass down the valley, and without an effort abandoned their claims on the towns. The policy so successfully begun was completed a few years later by Midhat Pasha while governor of Bagdad. It was he who continued the line of guard-houses as far as Rumády, and made of Ana for Bagdad what Deyr has become for Aleppo,—the head-quarters of a detached military force in possession of the Euphrates route. Caravans have since that time passed in more or less security down the valley. At the same time possession was taken of the few towns existing on the Tigris.

Great efforts have been made since then to encourage the small tribes to cultivate the soil, and south of Bagdad with a certain amount of success. Protection is now given to the Delim, Shammartoga, and Albu Mohammed to irrigate the river banks and grow wheat; and I have heard, though I cannot vouch for it as an eye-witness, that the Montefik, a large and powerful Bedouin tribe occupying Irak, have recently become industrious felláhin. Ferhán, too, Sheykh of the Shammar, has been honoured with the title of Pasha by the Government, and for a yearly stipend of £3000, has engaged to transform his own Bedouins in like manner into honest peasants. At Bagdad we heard flourishing reports of the success of this arrangement, but on examination found them to be based on the meagerest of facts. Ferhán, it is true, had collected a few hun-

dred Arabs at Sherghát, some of them Shammar, but the great majority outcasts from the Jiburi, and other low tribes of the Tigris, and with them had for some two years past made pretence of cultivating the valley. But pretence it merely was, for during the whole of our journey among the Shammar we saw nothing like cultivation, even in the neighbourhood of Ferhán's camp.

A still less successful scheme has been that of inducing the Ánazeh themselves to become peaceful subjects of the Porte. With this view Aslan Pasha, during his term of office at Deyr, marched a large body of troops against a section of the Sebáa, whom he found encamped in the valley of the Euphrates, and, having surrounded them, announced that it was the will of the Sultan that they should give up their nomadic life and pursue a more loyal mode of existence, as cultivators of the soil. The Bedouins, to whom nothing could be more distasteful, or indeed insulting, than such a proposal, at first demurred, but finding themselves threatened with the loss of their camels, and having no option given them by the Pasha, at last consented and, under the soldiers' superintendence, constructed long rows of mud-houses in various parts of the valley. In these, to their unutterable disgust, they had to make a pretence of living, and did so as long as the soldiers kept guard over them, a matter of three months, when, finding his men wanted elsewhere, the Pasha at last withdrew them, and the Bedouins without

delay returned to the desert. Several of these mud villages may still be seen in the valley, roofless and tenantless, the only result of Aslan Pasha's experiment.

There are many, however, who are of opinion that in time the Porte will succeed in its efforts, and without doubt it would be a great advantage for the security of the country if some hold could be gained over the Ánazeh and Shammar which should bring them within the power of the law, for as long as they have no fixed abodes the Government, even supported by the most powerful army, can neither levy tribute on them nor enforce its decrees against them. It is only now and then that the Bedouins allow themselves to be surprised, as the Sebáa were by Aslan Pasha. They are usually well informed of all that happens or is going to happen in the towns and, on news of any expedition moving in their direction, hastily decamp. Once in the desert, no troops in the world could control them. Scattering into small groups, their track becomes speedily lost in the waterless inhospitable plains.

With the small tribes it is easy to deal. They are nomadic only to the extent of moving about with their tents and their sheep a few miles further up or further down the valleys, but they never go far from the rivers. They are already aware of some of the advantages of living under settled authority, Turkish though it be, and now that they are secured against systematic molestation from the

desert they are beginning to plough and sow corn. They cling, however, all of them, to their flocks and herds, and as long as this is the case it is better to leave them in their tents than to try and make them live in houses. Nothing is more wretched than a pastoral life in fixed dwellings.

The most prosperous of the tribes are those which, while remaining purely nomadic, have either never been or have ceased to be troublesome to their neighbours. I have generally remarked that, wherever cattle and buffaloes are found, there the tribes are peaceable and flourishing. The Jiburi on the Tigris, and the Subbkha on the Euphrates, are good types of an honest, industrious, but purely pastoral race, living with their cattle all the year round in the same district, and making as good subjects as a Sultan need have. The Haddadin too are an excellent example of what pure nomades may be. These keep only sheep, with the exception of a few camels for transport duty, and have a just reputation in the desert for honesty and good manners. The citizens of Aleppo and Mosul entrust their sheep every winter to them and seem contented with the arrangement. The Haddadin are the most prosperous tribe we visited. The Weldi, further west, have a similar reputation for honesty, but, owing to some bad years lately and the extreme exactions of the Aleppo Government, they have been much impoverished.

With proper encouragement and light taxation, the northern desert might maintain a large and

wealthy pastoral population. It was never intended for any other. Indeed I doubt if it would not be an economical mistake to encourage the cultivation of *all* the lands which could possibly produce a crop. For full use to be made of the desert all the year round, some reliable pastures should be reserved for seasons of drought and for the extreme heat of summer. I believe the occupation of these in Algeria by European farmers has not been on the whole an advantage to the colonial revenue. What should be the aim of a wise government in Northern Arabia is, not to force its nomades to settle down as villagers, but to encourage the warlike tribes to give up their wars. This can only be done by showing them the advantages of peace, and giving security to all who do not wish to fight. Rich people, Bedouins or others, have little temptation to highway robbery.*

At the present moment then the Turkish Government again holds the Euphrates and the greater part of the Tigris valleys, with the plain of Irak southwards from Bagdad. It also has got possession of certain isolated points in the desert itself. Tudmur has been occupied and is now administered by a Turkish Mudír, and tribute is levied on all the small towns and villages of the Jebel Amúr and Sinjár. Caravans under escort can now pass with

* The French have succeeded as admirably by such a policy in the Sahara as they have failed lamentably in their agricultural schemes for Algeria.

tolerable safety from Aleppo to Bagdad by the Euphrates road, and from Damascus to Deyr. But except along these lines the Bedouins still hold their own, and, although our safe passage through their territory has proved that travelling in Mesopotamia, even without escort, is not so impossible as many suppose, yet a party of Bagdad merchants so journeying would hardly have been permitted to pass unmolested. The vast majority of travellers still prefer the roundabout but securer route through Diarbekr and Mosul.*

As to the comparative numbers of the Shammar and the Ánazeh, I have always heard the same proportion given, three to seven; I therefore take it to be correct, though the actual figures mentioned by my informants have ranged from thousands to tens of thousands. With the numbers themselves it is more difficult to deal. But, keeping the proportion above given, and allowing for all exaggerations, I think twelve thousand or twelve thousand five hundred Shammar to thirty thousand Ánazeh tents will not be very far from the truth. This, at four persons to a tent, would give fifty thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand souls in all.

The following is a table of the Shammar tribes as given me by a committee of Arabs, Bedouin and

* While I write the following news reaches me:—"Aleppo July 30. Both banks of the Euphrates are unsafe. A caravan was robbed of £3000 the other day near Mieddin."

Felláhin, at Sherghát, and revised by Faris himself:—

Shammar Tribes of Mesopotamia, all pure Bedouins, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They acknowledge the authority of one supreme Sheykh, who is also Sheykh of the Jerba, and is descended from their chieftain, Faris, who led them from the Nejd in the 17th century. Their present chief is Ferhán ibn Sfúk; but a portion of the tribe, perhaps one fourth, has seceded from Ferhán, and lives under the rule of his brother Faris. The Shammar of Mesopotamia are a branch of the Shammar of Jebel Shammar, and still preserve relations of consanguinity with these. They migrate north and south according to the season, but do not go further south in winter than the latitude of Ana. They exact tribute from the smaller tribes of Mesopotamia, and are independent of Turkish authority:—

		TENTS.
Jerba	Ferhán ibn Sfúk	2000
Hathba ...	Mohammed ibn Niglédand	500
Asslan	Múttany	400
Sáëkh	Mézer	500
Aleyán	Ersan ibn Daïs	300
Abde	Ferdi ibn Sheréyn	1000
Chedáda ...	Bédday	300
Ghäët	Beddr	500
Drérat	Hezá ibn Hezmi	500
Feddára ...	Gaï abou Jeyt	700
Amut	Sotann ibn Arnút	1100
Affarit	Múrrthy ibn Shehéni	500
Menieh... ...	Ibn Rashám...	800
Sábit	Jezzár el Ahhdeb	1000
Lahébi	Hássan el Droúsh	400
Sdeyt	Mézer	400
Hammára ...	Gálla ed Dúaba	400
Besides smaller sections ...	... ...	700
	In all, about ...	... 12,000

Allies and Tributaries of the Shammar, independent, for the most part, of Turkish authority :—

	TENTS.
1. *Zoba*, a Bedouin tribe, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They occupy Southern Mesopotamia as far as the junction of the rivers. Their present Sheykh is Záhir el Hamoud ...	5000
2. *Haddadin*, a pastoral tribe ; rich, peaceable, and honest, owning few camels or mares. They are entrusted by the felláhin of Mosul, Orfa and Aleppo with sheep to pasture during the winter. They occupy Upper Mesopotamia, north of the Sinjar hills. Their Sheykh is of the family of Ibn Wurshán	2000
3. *Taï*, a pure Bedouin tribe, formerly very powerful in Upper Mesopotamia, and allied to the Taï of Central Arabia. They own camels and mares, and carry the lance ; but are peaceable and rich. They have numerous flocks of sheep. Their present Sheykh, Abd er Rahman, is considered of very noble family	1000
4. *Ghess*, or *Jess*, a warlike tribe, but not of pure Arab blood. They own camels and mares, and carry the lance ; occupying the extreme north-west of Mesopotamia. Their Sheykh's name, Abdullah	1000
5. *Albu Hamid*, a small semi-Bedouin tribe, occupying the country between Jebel Hamrin and Jebel Sinjár. Their Sheykh, Ferhán	1000
6. *Jiburi*, a rich felláhin tribe, owning no camels or mares, and for the most part unarmed. They occupy the Tigris above Tekrit, and the Khábur, where they pasture large herds of buffaloes and cattle. They are hospitable to strangers, but take money for what they give	4000
7. *Ajuari*, a smaller tribe, resembling the Jiburi ...	1000

	TENTS.
8. *Jerîfa*, a pastoral tribe on the Euphrates, near Rowa, in part felláhin	500
9. *Buggára*, like the Jerîfa, but further north ...	800

The following is a list of the Ánazeh tribes in the geographical order of their summer quarters from North to South.

Ánazeh Tribes of Northern Arabia, all of them pure Bedouins, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They exact tribute from the small tribes west of the Euphrates, and are independent of Turkish authority. They own no supreme Sheykh, and are often at war with each other. Their range is from Aleppo in the north, to Jebel Shammar in the south.

1. *Fedáan*, the most warlike tribe of the desert; a rough, uncivilized people, owning few camels and few breeding-mares, and depending for these mainly upon plunder. They are divided into the following sections, each under its own Sheykh :—

	TENTS.
Meḥed. Sheykh, Jedáan	1000
Shmeylát	1000
Ajájera	1000
Khrysaa. Naïf ibn Keshish	1000

N. B.—There are two families of the Fedáan, Ibn Sbeni and Abu Snun, who are rich, and possess many mares. They take no part in the wars of their tribe, paying instead a tax to the tribe.

2. *Sebáa.* Wealthy in camels and mares, of which last they possess by far the best in Arabia. They are a well-bred, courteous people; hospitable and honest. They fight only in self-defence. They

are divided into the following sections, each under command of its own Sheykh :—

	TENTS.
Gomússa. Beteyen ibn Mershid ...	1000
Resallín	500
Abadát	500
Duám	500
Mesékha. Ibn Kardúsh	500
Moáyaja. Ferhán ibn Hedeb	500
Ammarát	500

N. B.—The *Misrab*, Sheykh Mohammed, is a section of the Resallín.

TENTS.

3. *Ibn Háddal*, a numerous and powerful tribe, whose Sheykh, Abd ul Mekhsin ibn Hemasdi, is considered the noblest in point of blood of any in the desert (Ibn Meziad of the Hesénneh only excepted).* They are rich and powerful and possess numerous mares 4000
4. *Hesénneh.* Once the leading tribe of the Ánazeh, but destroyed by a combination against them about sixty years ago of the Sebáa and the Roála. The family of their Sheykh, Fáris ibn Meziád, is accounted the noblest in point of blood of any in the desert. The tribe now lives under Turkish protection near Damascus, and number perhaps 500
5. *Roála*, or *Jeláas.* The most numerous, wealthiest, and most powerful tribe of the Ánazeh. Though the whole tribe is generally known as the *Roála*, this name only properly applies to a single section. The family of their Sheykh, Sotámm ibn Shaalán, is the most important, though not the most ancient, in the desert. In it the sheykhdom

* The Ibn Haddal and the Sebáa according to Burckhardt were originally part of one same tribe called the Bíshar, whence probably the name Jebel Bíshari below Deyr.

TENTS.

of the Jeláas is hereditary. The Jeláas at the present time possess but few mares, as they have partly abandoned the use of the lance for that of fire-arms. They own 150,000 camels. The Jeláas came from Nejd about seventy years ago,* and still preserve close relations with Jebel Shammar, where they still occasionally return in winter. They are now at war with the rest of the Ánazeh 12000

6. *Wélled Ali.* An ancient tribe allied with others of the same name in Central Arabia, and with the Ouled Ali of Western Egypt. They have many camels and mares; and until lately had charge of the pilgrim caravans starting for Mecca. Their Sheykh, Mohámmed Dúkhi ibn Smeyr, holds a high position in the desert ... 3000

7. *Sirhán*, a tribe of the lower Hamád, which rarely comes north. They have, I believe, few mares, and are little known ... ... ?

8 and 9. *Erfaldi*, Sheykh, Reja, and *Towf*, only seen in the Northern Desert within the last twelve years; little known ... ... ?

Allies and Tributaries of the Ánazeh.

Moáli, formerly a powerful and warlike tribe, not of pure Arab blood, though the family of the Sheykhs, descended from one of the caliphs, is held in high repute. Predatory and unreliable; but ancient allies of the Fedáan and Sebáa ... 1000

Weldi; honest shepherds, like the Haddadin; have a few good mares, no camels; defend themselves if attacked; a respectable tribe... 1000

* Compare Burckhardt, Fatalla, &c.

TENTS.

Afuddli, or *Erfuddli*, a cattle-breeding tribe like the Jiburi, but inhabiting the jungles of the Euphrates, where they make to themselves huts of tamarisk boughs. They are honest, peaceable people, and are armed with short spears and matchlocks against the lions which frequent the river;—perhaps 400

Abu Seraï, Abu Kamís, Delím, some felláh, and others, tributaries to the Ánazeh, but also under Turkish protection; peaceful shepherd tribes, inhabiting the right bank of the Euphrates. The Delím have sometimes good horses ... ... ?

Independent Tribes of the Upper Desert and Hamád.

Lehép, a predatory tribe between Aleppo and Hama; hard riders; robbers ... ... ?

Amúr, a small tribe of shepherds and robbers in the Jebel Amúr ... ... ?

Beni Sakkhr. Called by some an Ánazeh tribe; but I do not believe this. They live south of the Hauran, and do not migrate. It has been suggested that they are Jews, the tribe of Issachar ?

7. *Aduan*, a predatory tribe, east of the Jordan. They have a bad character in the desert. Sheykh, Goblan ... ... ?

Sherarát, a numerous tribe, purely Bedouin, and inhabiting the Wady Sirhán, and thence southwards as far as Nejd. They have no mares, breed dromedaries, and have a bad reputation ... ?

Alún, Sheykh, Mohammed Abunjád. A small tribe allied to the Sherarát. They inhabit the Wady Arabá, and the neighbourhood of Petra... ... ?

Sleb, a tribe of Indian origin, inhabiting the Hamád, and going far south into Nejd. They come as

far north in the summer as Túdmur, following the gazelle, on which they live. No camels, and but few sheep. They breed asses, and sell them in all the frontier towns from Queyt to Aleppo. Are accounted ignoble by the pure Arabs, and have a bad reputation on account of a certain caravan they misled in the desert twenty years ago and plundered;* but are in general a harmless, wild people, who take no part in the desert wars.

Tribes under the partial control of the Pashalik of Bagdad.

	TENTS.
Móntefik, a numerous and powerful tribe, partly Bedouin, partly felláh, inhabiting Irak and the right bank of the Euphrates below Hillah. Their Sheykh is generally appointed by the Pasha of Bagdad. This tribe, though formerly purely Bedouin, now cultivates the plains of the Lower Euphrates, and has become rich and prosperous. Present Sheykh, Nassr	8000
Beni Láam, another pure Bedouin tribe, lately turned felláh, but not to the extent of the Montefik. They inhabit the left bank of the Tigris, and across the frontier as far as into Persia	4000
Maadán, a large half-Bedouin tribe, inhabiting Irak and the southern Tigris valley	?
Albu Mohámmed, the same	?
Shammartúya, the same	?
Bútta, the same	?

There are also numerous small tribes and sections of tribes about Bagdad, but none of them deserve notice except the *Sabæans*, now found only in the

* See Palgrave.

neighbourhood of Souk esh Shiokh, a village on the Shatt el Arab below Hillah, and numbering in all about 3000 souls.

According to the Sabæan traditions, which date from the creation of the world, their history has been as follows: Before the time of Noah, they say, all the world was Sabæan, believing in one same unseen God, and speaking the same language. Noah had four sons, Shem, Ham, Yaman, and Japhet, who some time after the flood began to speak each a separate language, Shem only preserving that of his father (they know nothing of the tower of Babel). The Sabæans are the true descendants of Shem, and to the present day have preserved the ancient tongue unchanged. In it their *book* is written, and it is described as a sort of Syriac. The Sabæans first settled in Egypt, being the same Egyptians over whom Pharaoh ruled when he oppressed the children of Israel. The present tribe claims descent from Ardewán, a brother of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. They subsequently founded a kingdom at Damascus which lasted till two hundred years after the death of their prophet, John the Baptist (three hundred and sixty-eight before the Hejira). Then they removed to Bagdad, where they flourished until the Caliphate was overthrown by the Tartars. At that time they possessed four hundred churches, but these were then destroyed, Tamerlane carrying away all their books to Ispahan, where it is believed they still exist. They themselves

were dispersed over Irak and probably el Hasa, and are now reduced to the three thousand souls mentioned.

As regards their religion, which, in fact, is the only interesting, or for that matter, authentic part of the story, they say that they worship the Almighty God, the maker of light and darkness, whom no one has seen at any time. Their principal religious observance is Baptism, which they say was instituted by God in the garden of Eden, Adam being himself baptised "in the name of the first life, the second life, and the third life," all three names of the Almighty, but this baptism fell into disuse, and was restored by the preaching of their prophet, John the Baptist. They acknowledge no other prophet, and take no account of the Old or New Testament histories, except to the extent of believing that Christ was the Holy Ghost made visible to the world, but not God. They believe in a resurrection of the body, a day of judgment, and the reunion of every man to his wives. If unmarried the men will receive new wives, the number allowed in this world being four. They have a sacrament of unleavened bread and wine, of which their priests alone partake in private, and according to certain secret rites. This they believe to have been also instituted in the garden of Eden. As to their rite of baptism, they say it must be performed in running water, when it will wash away sin and ensure salvation. They baptise the children when thirty days old, but the rite is constantly re-

newed, the priests baptising themselves once a week. They fast thirty-six days in the year, abstaining from meat, and have four festivals, New Year's day; the feast of St. John; the fifth day after the anniversary of their baptism; and one called Déhmeh Dîmas, of which they do not profess to know the meaning.

I got these details from Dr. Colvill, at Bagdad, who knows their Sheykh. He considers their religion a bastard form of Christianity, and interesting mainly as an instance of the survival of the Christian tradition in Arabia.*

* Compare Niebuhr's list made in 1768, and Burckhardt's at the beginning of the present century.

CHAPTER XXV.

Children of Shem! First-born of Noah's race,
And still for ever children; at the door
Of Eden found, unconscious of disgrace
And loitering on while all are gone before;
Too proud to dig, too careless to be poor,
Taking the gifts of God in thanklessness,
Not rendering ought, nor supplicating more,
Nor arguing with Him if He hide His face.
Yours is the rain and sunshine, and the way
Of an old wisdom, by our world forgot,
The courage of a day which knew not death;
Well may we sons of Japhet, in dismay,
Pause in our vain mad fight for life and breath,
Beholding you.—I bow and reason not.

Physical characteristics of the Bedouin Arabs—They are short-lived—On certain fallacies regarding them—Their humanity—Their respect for law—They are defective in truth and in gratitude—Their childish love of money—Their hospitality—Bedouin women.

THE Bedouin Arab of pure blood is seldom more than five feet six inches high; but he is long-limbed for his size; and the drapery in which he clothes himself gives him full advantage of his height. In figure he is generally light and graceful. Indeed, I cannot recall an instance to the contrary, unless it be in Mohammed Dukhi, Sheykh of the Welled Ali, who is rather thick-set. Actual fatness is unknown

among the pure Bedouins ; and when they see it in others they look upon it with contemptuous pity as a deformity.

As young men, the Bedouins are often good-looking, with bright eyes, a pleasant smile, and very white teeth ; but after the age of thirty the habit of constantly frowning, to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun, gives their faces a fierce expression, often quite at variance with their real character. Hard training, too, and insufficient food have generally by that time pinched and withered their cheeks, and the sun has turned their skin to an almost Indian blackness. At forty their beards turn grey, and at fifty they are old men. I doubt if more than a very few of them reach the age of sixty.

The reason for this premature decay must be looked for in their way of life. From childhood up, they have been in hard training, eating but once a day, and then sparingly, and sleeping on the ground. This ensures them high health and a full enjoyment of all their faculties, at the time, but uses the body rapidly ; and a certain "staleness" follows, which the Bedouins acknowledge by withdrawing early from all unnecessary exertion. There is little work in the desert for men which needs to be done ; and, once the love of enterprise and excitement over, there is no reason for any but the poorest to go far from his tent.* Political intrigue or a love of

* Sport is seldom a sufficient inducement. None but the children

hoarding take the place of physical action. The ghazús and marauding expeditions are left to the conduct of younger men; and the rest of the Bedouin's days are spent in idleness. The reaction is quickly felt. Men of forty, especially those in a high position, complain of indigestion, of rheumatism, or other maladies caused by inactive life. Of the first positive disease they die.

A man, who falls seriously ill, has as little chance of recovering as the wild animal has, in these open plains. Doctors do not exist, nor is there any knowledge, among the Bedouins, of herbs. The sick man is obliged, whatever his condition, to move with the tribe as it moves. He is set upon a camel, and clings to it as best he can, in sun or rain or wind, often with his head hanging down lower than his heels, and only prevented from falling by the occasional help of his sons or the women who walk beside him. In the tent he lies surrounded by his friends, who, very Job's comforters, talk to him till he dies. Wounds, too, in spite of the healthy condition of body which a spare habit gives, are often fatal from want of knowledge or merely from want of quiet. The Bedouin prefers to die thus, and meets his end without fear. In certain families it is considered a point of honour not to die, as we should say, "in bed." In youth, however, ill-health or defective powers are unknown; and, for enjoy-

seem interested in it, though hawks and greyhounds are kept in all the principal tents.

ment of living, a Bedouin in all probability gets as much out of his few years as we do out of our many.

Much has been talked of the wonderful faculties of sight and hearing possessed by the Bedouins, but I have not remarked that they excel in either. On the contrary, short-sight is common among them; and the ordinary Bedouin sees and hears no better than the ordinary Italian, Greek, or Spaniard. We were ourselves constantly appealed to by them when trying to distinguish objects at a distance. In the same way their faculty of finding their way across the deserts has been much exaggerated. Bedouins, of course, know their own district well, and that district is often a large one; but, once take them out of it, and they are very nearly helpless. An Anazeh cannot, as a South American gaucho does, make out his course by sun and wind, and keep it day after day till he arrives at the point intended. He travels, on the contrary, from landmark to landmark; and, where these fail, he depends entirely on the information he may gather from shepherds or at tents. If the country be uninhabited, he is frightened. Living always in the desert, the Bedouins yet speak of the Chôl or Berríye in terms of awe. They could never understand how it was that we ventured without guides into unknown lands. Of keeping a straight course for a whole day they seem incapable, for they are unable to calculate the gradual motion of the sun round them. The only

man we met who could do this was the little old Shammar who accompanied us across Mesopotamia; and he was almost blind. When a tribe is on the march it goes hither and thither, to left and right, but never straight to its destination. There is some mental obliquity in this.

The Bedouins have no great appearance of muscular strength; but they are singularly active and enduring. They are fast walkers and fast runners, and on horseback are untiring. As horsemen, however, according to the ordinary rules and as compared with some other races, they are not pre-eminent. Only a few of them have really good seats, while of their hands it is difficult to judge, as they ride only with the halter. They display little skill in showing off a horse to advantage, and none whatever in husbanding his powers. Their only notion of galloping a horse is to *ride* him, with arms and legs, from start to finish; but they are dexterous in turning him sharply and in taking advantage of the ground in pursuit or flight. Their great merit, as horse-breakers, is unwearied patience. Loss of temper with a beast is not in their nature, and I have never seen them strike or ill-use their mares in any way. Patience is indeed one of the most characteristic qualities of the Bedouin.

Courage, though held in high estimation, is not considered essential with the Bedouins, even in a Sheykh. "God has not given me courage," they will sometimes say, "and I do not fight," just as an

English hunting man will admit having "lost his nerve." Their fellows pity rather than laugh at such people. The young men, however, are usually fond of enterprise, and will start on marauding expeditions for glory quite as readily as for gain. Hard blows are often exchanged, and most Bedouins have wounds to show; but no idea of shame is connected with the act of running away, even if the fugitives are in superior force.

The Bedouin is essentially humane, and never takes life needlessly. If he has killed a man in war he rather conceals the fact than proclaims it aloud, while murder or even homicide is almost unknown among the tribes. He feels no delight, like men of other races, in shedding blood.

Truth, in ordinary matters, is not regarded as a virtue by the Bedouins, nor is lying held shameful. Every man, they say, has a right to conceal his own thought. In matters of importance, the simple affirmation is confirmed by an oath, and then the fact stated may be relied on. There is only one exception to the general rule of lying among them. The Bedouin, if questioned on the breed of his mare, will not give a false answer. He may refuse to say, or he may answer that he does not know; but he will not name another breed than that to which she really belongs. The original reason of this is, perhaps, that among themselves there is no deception possible, for secrets do not exist in a Bedouin camp, and each man knows his neighbour's

mare as well as he knows his own. But the rule, however occasioned, is now universally admitted; and I have noticed repeated instances in which truth on this point had been scrupulously told, when there were no witnesses present, and to the disadvantage of the teller. "What is the breed of your mare?" I have said, to a poor man who has brought his beast expecting me to buy it. "Shuémeh," he has answered.—"Not Shuémeh Sbáh then?"—"No, Shuémeh;" and this, although knowing that the money value of the former would be three times that of the latter. The rule, however, does not hold good on any other point of horse dealing. The age, the qualities, and the ownership of the horse may be all falsely stated.

With regard to honesty, the pure Bedouin stands in marked contrast to his half-bred brethren. Among these thieving is the rule, nor is the term *harámi*, thieves, ill-taken when applied to them. The Kurdish and semi-Kurdish tribes of Upper Mesopotamia make it almost a point of honour to steal, but the pure Arab accounts it disgraceful. Acts of petty larceny are unknown among the Ánazeh and Shammar. During the whole of our travels we never lost in this way so much as the value of a shilling. Highway robbery, on the other hand, is not only permitted, but held to be a right; and travellers, passing without proper escort from or introduction to the tribes, may expect to lose their beasts, goods, clothes, and all they possess. There is no kind of

shame attached to such acts of rapine, more than in ancient times was attached to the plunder and enslaving of aliens within the Roman frontier. By desert law, the act of passing through the desert entails forfeiture of goods to whoever can seize them.*

A respect for law is indeed one of the leading features of the Bedouin character; but it must be understood of *their own* law only, not of Turkish or European law. These they despise. Justice indeed, substantial justice independent of persons, is nowhere more often appealed to nor more certain of attainment than in the desert. The poor man there never suffers wrong, *as a poor man;* and all cases are decided according to the strict meaning of the law, it is impossible to say the *letter*, for it is unwritten. Petty cases are disposed of daily by the Sheykh of the section or tribe, much as a country magistrate deals with questions of vagrancy or affiliation, while more important matters are reserved for the special decision of a superior or stranger Sheykh, or else for arbitration by three, seven, or twelve jurors. I know of a case thus decided by jury, which will serve as an excellent illustration of the kind of disputes raised, and

* "According to Roman law, in its *more improved state*, an alien with whose country the relations of friendship and hospitality did not exist, was not technically considered an enemy, *hostis*, yet his person might lawfully be enslaved and his property confiscated if found on Roman territory."—WHEATON'S *Law of Nations.*

the way of deciding them. The case was as follows:—

In one of the Sebáa tribes, all mares of the Máneghí breed taken in war are, by immemorial custom, the right of a certain family, of which the Sheykh is usually a member. Now it happened that a fine Máneghieh mare had thus been taken in a skirmish by a poor man of the tribe, who at the same time had lost his own mare; and the Sheykh had seized her by virtue of his privilege. The poor man protested, and the case was brought for decision before twelve elders, chosen for the purpose. The poor man argued that the mare taken was in fact his own mare, for in taking this one he had lost her. The Sheykh pleaded immemorial custom. After much consultation, the jury, admitting the Sheykh's general right, nevertheless gave judgment in favour of the plaintiff, and ordered the mare to be given to the poor man. Another curious case was the one we witnessed among the Welled Ali, where the right to Jedáan's wife was in dispute.

What is strange in these courts is that there is no officer of any kind to enforce the decisions. Public opinion alone compels obedience to the law. In extreme cases, and as the utmost penalty of the law, the offender is turned out of the tribe. In cases of homicide, the law leaves it to the family of the deceased to do itself justice, for revenge is a duty with all his relations within the second degree. The slayer himself may be slain, or, what is con-

sidered even more satisfactory, the chief man among his relations, also within the second degree, on the principle of "you have killed my cousin, I will kill yours." A death purges a death; and the blood feud ends. But sometimes it happens that, instead of the slayer or his cousin, a second member of the injured family is slain. Then two deaths will be required, and the feud may continue for years before the balance is reached. The obligation of vengeance is so sacred that men will travel great distances to find out the enemies of a murdered relation. Mohammed ibn Taleb told us that, when his uncle was killed by one of the hostile faction of Túdmur, a man of the Beni Láam came all the way from the Jôf to avenge him. The feud, however, may at any time be extinguished by the payment of fifty camels, or £250, for each death. These blood feuds are the only cases of deliberate bloodshed known in the desert, and they are rare. They have an excellent effect on public morals, as they make men chary of shedding blood. A homicide not only has to fear the vengeance of his enemies, but the anger of his relations involved by him in the quarrel; and it is probably due to this apparently barbarous law that even robbers and outlaws seldom take human life. As an instance of the extreme moderation of Bedouin practice I would cite the following. It happened not many years since:

A young Frenchman, M. Dubois d'Anger, was

travelling with his servant, who had been a Zouave, from Aleppo to Túdmur, and fell in with a large party of the Mesćkha tribe. He and his servant were well armed, and, as the Arabs rode up to them, the Frenchmen dismounted, and, without question, opened fire. The Sheykh's mare was killed by a ball, but the Arabs were not touched. These charged down on the two Frenchmen, who made a gallant resistance, but, the Zouave being killed in the scuffle, his master surrendered. The Arabs, though much incensed at the death of the mare, which was a valuable one, contented themselves with stripping their captive and letting him go. The assault on his part had been unprovoked; and there are few countries where the penalty would not have been a severer one.

The weakest point of the Bedouin character is undoubtedly his love of money. This is not merely the careful gathering together of wealth, but a love of the actual coin, the "white silver pieces," which he prefers to gold. The love of money, as money, seems to be natural to the human race, and strong in inverse proportion to its practical value. Thus all children have a passion for money, as soon as they can grasp the idea of ownership, preferring it to any plaything that can be offered them. Yet it is practically valueless to them. In the same way, the Bedouin, living in the desert all the year round, and having no need of things that money can give, or the opportunity even of spending it, will travel

great distances, and give himself infinite toil and trouble to acquire a few pieces, the value of which in camels or sheep he would not be at the pains to collect. In like manner a sheykh, who would not suffer himself to be tempted by more practical offers of advantage, will often forget his dignity at the sight of coin. It is by trading on this weakness that the Turks have gained many of their "diplomatic triumphs" in the desert.

In spite, however, of their love of money the Bedouins are not clever commercially. The offer of buying their property is always a little distasteful to them, in some cases insulting; and they have no better principle of dealing than to increase the price demanded in strict proportion to the supposed willingness of the purchaser to buy. It often happens, for this reason, that a horse or a camel, which they begin by refusing to one purchaser, will afterwards be sold to another at a third of the original price. The commercial spirit, however, differs considerably in the different tribes. The Beni Sakhr, for instance, though accounted pure Bedouins, are said to be as thorough traders as the Jews themselves; and, among the Ánazeh even, there are well-known commercial tribes. These, however, are not the most esteemed.

Public opinion, though acknowledging the delights of wealth, always respects a man who is indifferent to them. The great sheykhs are usually liberal of their property, distributing largely among

their adherents the prizes made in war, or the presents they receive from strangers. The young are more remarkable in this way than the older men; and Faris, the Shammar chief, who represents the highest traditions of the past, keeps nothing for himself either in the way of presents or prizes. All goes to his retainers. Much, too, as the Bedouins love money, they will not accept it, except under special circumstances, from strangers living under their tents;—and this brings us to their great virtue, their hospitality.

Hospitality to the European mind does not recommend itself, like justice or mercy, as a natural virtue. It is rather regarded as what theologians call a *supernatural* one; that is to say, it would seem to require something more than the instinct of ordinary good feeling to throw open the doors of one's house to a stranger, to kill one's lamb for his benefit, and to share one's last loaf with him. Yet the Bedouins do not so regard it. They look upon hospitality not merely as a duty imposed by divine ordinance, but as the primary instinct of a well-constituted mind. To refuse shelter or food to a stranger is held to be not merely a wicked action, an offence against divine or human law, but the very essence of depravity. A man, thus acting, could not again win the respect or toleration of his neighbours. This, in principle, is the same in all Arab tribes, Bedouin or not; but the particular laws and obligations of hospitality among them

differ widely. Thus, the Jibúri, the Aghedáat, and other felláhin tribes, give hospitality, but they accept payment for it; while the lowest tribe of all, the Amúr, will rob the stranger who comes to their tents, and count their hospitality as beginning only from the moment of his eating with them. Among pure Bedouins this virtue has a far wider meaning.

A stranger once within an Ánazeh or Shammar camp, unless he be a declared enemy, the member of a hostile tribe, is secure from all molestation; and even an enemy, if he have once dismounted and touched the rope of a single tent, is safe. The ordinary stranger is at perfect liberty to go where he will and dismount where he pleases. He usually selects the largest tent, for its size signifies the wealth of the owner. There he may remain, housed and fed, as long as he will, the limit of such hospitality in respect of time being quite indefinite. I have not been able to get any one to fix its duration. Nevertheless, I suspect that, in the tent of a sheykh or great man, there must be some rule as to this. I never heard of such a case; but I imagine that, after a few days, some friend or dependent of the host gives a hint to the intruder that it is time to move on; or, among the poor, that the host himself comes forward with the tale of an empty larder as an excuse for urging departure. But this is merely a surmise. In ordinary cases the guest stays but one

night, and then departs, no greeting or form of adieu or thanks being considered necessary on leaving.* In no tent, however poor, could money be offered in payment for lodging or for common food; but we have sometimes been asked to purchase the lamb or kid with which we were to be feasted. In such cases the fiction is preserved of the animal being procured from another tent.

After a lengthened stay with a Sheykh, it is customary to give a crown piece to the coffee-maker, and perhaps another to the cook, if cook there be, both usually negro slaves, with a smaller silver coin to whoever holds your horse's stirrup at mounting. To the great man himself presents may be offered, but only at arrival, so as not to bear the appearance of being a payment. A cloak, a pair of boots, and a bag of sugar for the women, is the usual gift; but coffee-beans and tobacco are always acceptable. A pistol, too, is a welcome present; but it would not be accepted by a great man, unless he had an equivalent to give in return. In all these matters it is necessary to calculate carefully the rank of the host and that of the guest, to avoid giving offence. A poor man is received in the same way as a rich one; but the latter is expected to bring a cloak, if the visit be paid to the chief Sheykh of a tribe.

* Gratitude for hospitality is not expected and never shown. Indeed, the French proverb is very applicable to Bedouin morals, which says, "La nécessité ayant fini, l'ingratitude rentre dans ses droits."

These presents are always of honour, not of emolument; and are generally passed on at once to friends and dependents, that there may be no doubt as to the purity of the Sheykh's motive. Poor travellers often stay for weeks at a single camp, passing from tent to tent, and being always well received.

The Bedouins are hot-tempered, but they seldom allow their passions to pass wholly beyond control. It is not often that a quarrel leads to more than words, or that a knife is drawn in anger. One excellent reason for this is their sobriety. No drink stronger than *lebben*,* or sour milk, is known among them, and they look upon the use of all fermented liquors as disgraceful. A Frank even, who should take wine or spirits with him to the desert, would forfeit all their respect. Brutal crimes have no place in the catalogue of Bedouin sins.

So far, I have spoken only of the men. Of the Bedouin women a shorter description will be enough. In person they are proportionately taller than the men, and it is not unusual to see the older of them fat and unwieldy. As girls they are pretty, in a wild picturesque way, and almost always have cheerful, good-natured faces. They are hardworking

* Although no European doctor will admit that sour milk can be in the least intoxicating, the Bedouins look upon it as at least a stimulant; and we, who travelled without any other, came at last to regard it as such.

and hardworked, doing all the labour of the camp: fetching wood and drawing water, setting and pulling down the tents, milking the ewes and she-camels, preparing the lebben, (a rather toilsome work,) and cooking the dinners. They live apart from the men, but are in no way shut up or placed under restraint. In the morning they all go out to gather wood for the day, taking a camel or a donkey with them; and, whenever we have met them so employed, they have seemed in the highest possible spirits. They enjoy a good deal of society amongst themselves, going about together to each other's tents, and taking their children with them. They have, besides, the society of their male relations in the nearest degrees; and their position is by no means one to be pitied. They do not seem to think of complaining of it.

No people are so kind to children as the Bedouins are. The son of a Sheykh is nursed and played with and petted by the men in the Sheykh's tent all day long; and children are never scolded or ill-used. Among the better bred Bedouins the boys are carefully brought up, and have very pretty manners. When quite young, and till they are three years old, however, they are kept dirty and ill-dressed, which gives them a slovenly appearance; but this is done purposely, to preserve them from the evil eye. Later on they are as clean as most of their elders, which is not, perhaps, saying much.

In mental qualities the women of the desert are far below the men, their range of ideas being extremely limited. Some few of them, however, get real influence over their husbands, and even through them over their tribes. In more than one Sheykh's tent, it is in the woman's half of it that the politics of the tribe are settled.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branches thereof will not cease But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"—Job.

Religion of the Bedouins confined to a belief in God—They have no ceremonial observances—Their oaths—They are without belief in a future life—Their superstitions are few—Their morality an absolute code—Their marriages.

With the single exception of a belief in God, inherited from the earliest times, the Bedouins profess no religious creed whatever; neither have they, it may almost be said, any superstitions. No people in the world take less account of the supernatural than they do, nor trouble themselves so little with metaphysics.

Their belief in God is of the simplest kind. It hardly extends beyond the axiom that God exists; and, if, as some have affirmed, they connect the idea of Him with the sun or with the heavens, no trace of such an opinion has come under my notice. "God is God," they say, and it very simply expresses all that they know of Him. Who and what and where He is, has not, I should think, ever been so much as discussed among them. Of a divine revelation they seem to have no traditions, nor of any law divinely instituted. God is the fate to which all must bow, the cause of the good and of

the evil in life, of the rain and of the sunshine, of the fertility of their flocks, and of the murrains which sometimes afflict them. But they do not seek to propitiate Him with prayer, nor complain of His severity when they suffer. They neither bless nor curse Him, nor do they regard Him with love or fear. If He have any personal relation with themselves it is as the silent witness of their oaths, the name to which they appeal in their disputes. But even thus, they expect nothing at His hands, neither protection from wrong nor punishment if they are forsworn.

Prayer, as an outward act of religion, is not practised by the pure Bedouins; and, even in those tribes which have become tainted with the Mahometanism of the towns, it is reserved chiefly for the eyes and ears of strangers. The Shammar, alone of all the *noble* tribes we visited, possessed a mollah; and his duties with them were in no way of a priestly character. The reason of his presence at all must be looked for in the semi-Turkish character of their late Sheykh, Sfuk,—whose son, Faris, though a man of the noblest birth, and the highest character, still recites his prayers daily. With this almost single exception, the practice of religion may be taken as the sure index of low morality in a tribe. The degraded felláhin of Irak are fanatically Shia and conform to most of the Mahometan rules. Among the Ánazeh I do not remember having noticed an instance of prayer.

Though in no sense religious, the Bedouins, like all Arabs, make frequent use of the name of God, generally as a mere form of speech, but occasionally to emphasize a declaration. "Hámdullah," "Inshalláh," and the like expressions are in their mouths all the day long, but these certainly have less of serious meaning in them than the corresponding "thank God," and "please God," with us. "Mashallah,"—"as it pleases God"—has, perhaps, a slight tinge of superstition mixed with its meaning. It is used to correct expressions of admiration, for fear of ill luck. Thus it would be considered impolite and a little dangerous to remark upon the beauty of a mare without adding "mashallah," and we have more than once been corrected for this by the owner of the animal.

The only solemn use made of the Divine name is when an affirmation is to be strengthened by an oath. Then the right hand is raised, and Alláh is invoked. A statement thus emphasized may in all instances be relied on from a pure Bedouin; but I have not been able to discover that their fidelity is enforced by any fear of consequences. Among the low Felláhin tribes, who profess Mahometanism, false oaths are of common occurrence. The Bedouin's oath is in fact an appeal to honour, at least as much as to religion; and this may be further seen in the corresponding form of affirming a promise, "aala rasi," ("on my head be it,") where no name of God is used.

There is, however, one solemn act, to which God

is really called as witness, and which has a true religious character with those who make it, the oath of brotherhood. This is essentially the covenant which Abraham made with Abimelech at Beersheba, and binds those who take it in all respects to act as brothers. Aid and assistance must be given in case of private quarrels, and, if contracted between sheykhs, in case of war. Neither the sheykh nor his people can commit any act of hostility against the people of a brother sheykh, nor can cattle be retained if robbed from a brother. It often happens that in a raid camels or sheep, belonging to a brother, are taken with the spoil of the enemy. In this case, on appeal made, they are at once restored. Moreover, if brothers, belonging to hostile tribes, happen to meet in battle, they may not engage or take part directly against each other, and must choose other combatants.

The oath of brotherhood is never lightly taken or with other than a serious intention. The form of words is repeated in a grave voice, and no allusion to it of a trivial nature would be tolerated, either before or after the act. Two witnesses must attest it, though it is only necessary for one to be actually present. The other may be informed of it immediately afterwards. I have never heard of an instance where the oath has been broken.

Though usually contracted in consequence of some real sympathy between the swearers, an alliance of this sort is sometimes made between the

sheykhs of tribes for political motives, or even for motives of advantage. Two sheykhs will thus swear brotherhood as the preliminary to a peace; and, on the other hand, most Bedouin sheykhs have brothers among the sheykhs of the desert towns, who are often of pure Arab blood, and who recognise the rules of Desert honour. In this latter case the oath is of great service to both parties, to the Bedouin in the town and to the townsman in the Desert.

The oath binds those who have taken it in every respect as brothers, except in the matter of marriage, for there is no prohibition of marriage between a brother and his brother's sister.

A belief, then, in God, certainly exists among the Bedouins, though the only active form of it is a submission to the Divine will. It stands in singular correspondence with the religion of the ancient patriarchs. At the present day, no doubt, it is but a vague reflection of the ancient faith, and depends as much upon custom as every other belief or prejudice of the Bedouin mind. We were pointed out in the Shammar tents certain men, the Zedíye, who, the Arabs explained to us, were distinguished from themselves for two reasons. The first was that they prayed to the devil, and the second that they wore their shirts cut square at the neck. Those who told us this made no distinction in importance between the two peculiarities.

With the belief in God, religion in the desert ends.

The kindred faith, so essential to our own happiness, that in a future life, seems to have no place in the Bedouin mind. Like Job, the Bedouin looks upon the grave as a "land of darkness which is darkness itself," and it enters not into the scope of his wishes to hope for anything beyond. It is difficult for a European to put himself into the position of one who is content to die thus, who neither believes nor despairs because he does not believe. The Bedouin knows that he shall die but he does not fear death. He believes that he shall perish utterly, yet he does not shudder at the grave. He thinks no more of complaining than we do because we have not wings. In his scheme of the universe there has never been room for a heaven or a hell.

The words I have quoted at the head of this chapter are precisely the expression of the Bedouin's thought, if he thinks of death. But in fact he thinks little or nothing about it. His way of life prevents this. In Europe we suffer from the malady of thought, quite as much in consequence of our idle habits as from an excess of intelligence. The Bedouin, in his youth, has no time for idleness; he is constantly employed. A life spent in the open air, a thoroughly healthy condition of body, a spare diet, and hard exercise, are not conducive to serious thought, or to that melancholy which leads to reflection upon things unseen. We ourselves had ample proof of this during our travels. Our minds were busy all day long with the things before us.

Of the past and of the future we thought little, but of our immediate prospects of dinner much. As we sat hour after hour in our saddles, watching the horizon turn slowly round us, or marking the sun's progress by the shadows of our camels' necks, we acknowledged that we could not think. Our hopes were bounded by the well which we might reach at evening, our fears by the low line of hills which might conceal an enemy. The interest of the moment and the bare pleasure of living absorbed all our fancy. A vivid present shut out past and future, and even in moments of danger we had not time for the thought of death.

Thus it is with the Bedouins in youth; but in old age, even when health fails them and their strength, they are no better circumstanced. A Bedouin may perfectly well pass all his days from the cradle to the grave and never have spent a single one of them alone. His life is a life of society. In the outer tent, if he be a rich man, no hour of the day nor any day in the year, will he find less than half a dozen friends or dependents; while in the inner tent, women and children, slaves and relations are constantly present. If he is a poor man, he will sit all day in the tents of others. No Bedouin rides, even for a few miles, alone; and like his mare, if he finds himself without his fellows, the bravest is frightened.

Another reason too why in Europe we so greatly appreciate and fear death, is that all of us have at

some time or other of our lives stood face to face with it. In the desert, no one comes back from such an interview, for the first serious illness kills. The Bedouins know that they will die because they have seen others die; but they have never known what it is to be in the jaws of the lion. Thus, with the terror of death the *necessity* of another life ceases. It does not present itself to their imagination, and their fancy has never taken wing beyond the grave.

Of superstitions I have noticed singularly few in the desert, and none that will stand the test of a sacrifice of real advantage. The Bedouins have indeed certain prejudices as to colour and markings in their mares, and account this lucky and that unlucky; but none would reject a good animal for a mere fanciful reason. They have no lucky days or lucky months. They attach no omen to the path of birds in the air or of beasts on the plain. They dream no dreams, and see no apparitions. They dress, indeed, their children in black, and keep them unwashed for fear, they say, of the evil eye; but I would as soon account for it by the common reason —custom. Their ejaculations, too, are mildly superstitious, but no one would quarrel with another for using or not using them. The fact is, they care exceedingly little about these things and a great deal for material advantage.*

* The boy Ghánim, who travelled with us, wore an amulet on his arm, which he had brought from Jebel Shammar as a protection from bullets; but he was ashamed to have it seen.

In morality the Bedouins differ from ourselves as widely as in religion. With us morality is deduced from certain divinely instituted laws, but with them it is accepted as a natural order of things. They make no appeal to conscience or the will of God in their distinctions between right and wrong, but appeal only to custom. This is right, because it has always been accounted right, that wrong for a similar reason. "We keep our oaths," they say, "because we are Bedouins. It would be a shame to us if we did otherwise. The Turks break their oaths, because they are Turks. To them it is no shame." The Bedouin rules, with respect to wine and forbidden meats, are accounted for in the same way. "The Sleb," they say, "eat the hedgehog; we do not." It is hardly more than a matter of statistics.

That they have, however, very strong principles of right and wrong is evident on the face of it, as is the support given to morality by public opinion. No man in the desert admires or approves the evil-doer, even if he be successful. The shame clings to him still in spite of his power or of his wealth. Courage, hospitality, generosity, justice,—these are virtues which always command respect in the desert; and although lying and thieving, under certain restrictions, carry with them no penalty in public reprobation, other crimes which we in our laxity tolerate are not forgiven so easily. Breach of trust and dishonesty, so universal in modern Europe, and

so little condemned there, are considered by the Bedouins pre-eminently shameful. I do not think, incredible as it may sound to English ears, that the Bedouin exists who, if trusted with money by a friend, would misemploy it. The Weldi and Haddadín are entrusted every winter by the citizens of Aleppo and Mosul with thousands of sheep, for which they account satisfactorily in the spring to their owners. The Bedouin system of joint ownership in a mare would be impossible in a country where honesty between man and man was not a general rule. In all the tribes, it constantly happens that widows and orphans succeed to considerable properties in camels and sheep, but nobody supposes them to be in any particular danger of suffering wrong at the hands of their relations. The Agheyl are proverbial for their unimpeachable honesty; and there is no man among them who might not be trusted with large sums of money. That there are rogues in the desert is probable, but dishonesty is not, as in modern Europe, the rule. It is the very rare exception. The thieves for the most part hang together, and form small tribes apart from the rest; these are composed of men who have been turned out by their fellows, and of whom nothing good can be expected. In the large tribes persons of known dishonesty are not tolerated.

In the same way injustice on the part of those in power is almost impossible. Public opinion at once asserts itself; and the sheykh, who should attempt

to override the law, would speedily find himself deserted.

Although great latitude is allowed by Bedouin law in the point of marriage and divorce, immorality, in the technical sense of an offence against those laws, appears to be far less common than with European nations. It is, of course, difficult for a mere passing stranger to get information on these points, but I should say, from all that I have heard, that conjugal infidelity is most uncommon in the desert. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, every one in a Bedouin tent, women as well as men, must live constantly *en évidence*, and it is difficult to conceive how an intrigue could be commenced or carried on. The women have no right to speak to any man but their nearest relations, and could not do so without twenty witnesses to repeat what had happened. The connivance of sisters, mothers-in-law, and servants would be necessary for any woman who designed a violation of the marriage law. Then divorce is so easy and simple a process that punishment would at once follow, the slightest suspicion of a real cause for complaint being more than sufficient reason. A woman may be sent back to her parents without other form than that of the husband's saying to her before witnesses, "You are divorced," or even without any form at all; and she has an equal right to leave him, with or without reason. The ill-assorted marriages then generally end within a few months of their being contracted; and there is no

excuse left for intrigue, on the ground of domestic unhappiness. The men, too, affect an extreme indifference to the charms of female society, possibly more than they feel; but the fact proves that no credit is attached, even among the young and thoughtless, to what are called "successes." Indeed, extreme attention to women is always looked down upon by the Arabs as effeminate and "Turkish." Mohammed ibn Taleb, who had been away from his house for a month, when I asked him if he was not anxious to get back to his wife and children, replied, as if mortified at a charge of weakness, "Why should I wish it? I have hardly yet left home." Open licentiousness is unknown in the desert.

The poorer Bedouins seldom have more than one wife at a time, though there is no restriction in their law on that head. Nor do the rich often contract a second marriage, as long as the first remains a happy one. A woman who pleases her husband and has borne him sons is pretty safe against the introduction of new women into his tent. The common cause of disagreement is when the wife fails to give a son to her husband, for the lack of male heirs is considered not only a misfortune, but a disgrace among the Bedouins. Then, after two or three years, the husband is pretty sure to contract a new marriage, sometimes sending back the first wife to her parents, or more commonly retaining both. Where this is the case, and especially after repeated failures to obtain male issue, quarrels and disagreements will arise

between rival wives. In such cases it is not unusual to see a woman leave her husband for the reason that she cannot agree with the elder wife, for the first married generally retains her position as mistress of the household, and often abuses it. It is, however, remarkable how little jealousy is generally shown, even where several wives have to live together. To European ideas all this is of course very distasteful, but custom sanctions their position to Arab women, and there is nothing in the least degrading to them in the fact that they are not alone in the tent; while their quarrels seem to have no deeper foundation than those which divide the members of an ordinary English household.

Women, in the desert, have their rights, which are respected; and they do not complain that they are ill-treated. It has not yet occurred to them that they should be placed on an equal footing with their husbands or their brothers. They are hard-worked and happy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Political constitution of the Bedouins—Their liberty — Their equality—Their intolerance of authority—Their rules of warfare—Their blood feuds.

THE political organisation of the Bedouins is extremely interesting, for it gives us the purest example of democracy to be found in the world,—perhaps the only one in which the watch-words of liberty, equality, and fraternity are more than a name.

Liberty indeed is the basis of the whole system, and not national alone but individual liberty, unfettered by any restrictions of allegiance either to king or state. The individual Bedouin owes no duties even to his tribe, of which he cannot rid himself by a simple act of will; nor does he submit to any limitation of the sovereign right he possesses over his own person, except by his own free act and in his own interests. If dissatisfied, he can at any time retire from the society he belongs to, without question asked or fear of penalty. His position reminds one rather of that of the member of a political club than of a subject or citizen. As long as he is with his tribe, he must conform to certain rules, and he takes part in all its deliberations, but he can at any time withdraw from its authority, if he finds his opinions

in a minority or his independence hampered. No one therefore in the desert has the least cause to complain of tyranny, for the remedy is always at hand. Thus it constantly happens that, when party feeling has run high in a tribe, the minority, instead of submitting their opinion to that of the majority, retires from the main body and lives apart, without the secession being treated by these as an act of treason or hostility to the state. Even a single individual may retire unquestioned, to pitch his tents where he will; and in time of peace it is rare to find more than fifty or a hundred families living together in daily intercourse. Even when there is war, it is rather the fear of being attacked in detail than any duty towards the tribe which keeps its members together. The Roála, while we were with them, were assembled to the number of twelve thousand tents on the plain of Saighal, for war was going on, but they told us that five hundred tents had remained in Nejd, when the main body marched north, owing to a disagreement between a certain sheykh and the supreme sheykh of the tribe, Ibn Shaalán. They spoke, however, with no bitterness of the secession, though it had weakened them in an hour of danger, nor did they question the right of the minority to do as it pleased.

The individual then is the basis, from which one should start in a review of the political system of the desert. Each man's tent, to paraphrase the English boast, is his castle, where he is free to do

as he likes, without let or hindrance from his neighbours, while he has the additional advantage over the Englishman that he can remove his house and set it up again wheresoever he pleases. In it he is free of all control, whether from tax-gatherer or policeman, and he is obliged to contribute nothing, not even his services in time of war, to his neighbours. It is however immensely to his advantage to yield a little of this absolute independence, for the sake of protection, for he cannot practically live alone, or he would be pillaged by the men of other tribes, who have a natural right to despoil him.

He lives, then, except in rare instances, with his tribe, and takes part with them in the common defence, bringing his spear, when required, to swell the ranks of the defenders. He takes part too with his fellows in acts of war and robbery, which he could not do alone, and submits to the general laws and regulations which are necessary to every society. He has not, however, though a poor man, the feeling that he is amenable to laws made by others, not for his own but for their interests.

The system of government is a simple one. Each tribe or section of a tribe is under the nominal rule of a sheykh, chosen by vote; and there is no qualification required either in the electors or the elected. Common prejudice, nevertheless, is in favour of the supreme power being entrusted to members of certain families; and the sheykh is usually chosen out of these. A certain amount of wealth is neces-

sary too in a sheykh, for on him the principal burden of hospitality falls; and the qualities for governing, which seem to be hereditary everywhere, are fully recognised as such in the Desert. The son, the brother, or the uncle of their late sheykh is the man usually chosen to succeed him; and nothing but extraordinary aptitude for command can raise a new man to this position. Real power there is but little in the hands of the sheykh, though many thousand men nominally obey him. The truth is, he represents only the united will of the tribe; and in political matters he has to follow rather than lead public opinion. A very bold or a very clever sheykh may for a time become vested with real power, but this is in virtue not of his position but of his character. A weaker man is merely the representative of his tribe, and such a one seems generally preferred.

The sheykh has many duties and few advantages. On him falls the trouble of deciding small cases of dispute, quarrels between wife and husband, disputes as to ownership in a camel or a sheep. He has to transact the political business of the tribe, to sign the letters that are sometimes written by the public scribe, who is often a townsman, to receive strangers, and above all to keep open house at all hours for his people. He it is who is called in to stop quarrels, by the authority of his presence, and to rebuke disturbers of the peace. His main privilege is to lead the tribe from camp to camp, fixing by the position

of his own tent the ever-changing site of the rest. He has, too, certain extra shares in booty taken, and of course the place of honour at all meetings, and the presidency in councils of war. He cannot, however, levy the smallest tax on his own authority, or decide on any matter of important interest, nor has he any thing in the way of body guard or police to enforce his authority. His orders in small matters are obeyed, because public opinion is on his side. Where it is otherwise, they are made no account of. In most tribes, however, considerable outward respect is shown to the chief whom they have chosen. The men rise when he enters their tents, and show him the kind of familiar deference paid by well brought up people to their fathers. It is seldom that he abuses this position. Airs of authority and command are not tolerated by the Bedouins, and are seldom assumed by their Sheykhs. It is not considered well bred either to affect distinction of dress, or magnificence even in arms; and the only man we saw with any such pretension was Jedáan's half-witted son, Turki, who wore a shirt of chain armour. The Sheykhs, however, may be usually distinguished by the possession of a sword, an old Damascus weapon in a shabby scabbard, inherited from remote ancestors, but the only real superiority shown by them is one of manner. Good breeding and good birth are nearly always found together in the Desert. Jedáan, powerful chieftain as he is, shows his rough heels in his want of manner.

For certain families the tribes show an almost fanatical respect; and, when a member of one of them happens to be also a great man, his influence is nearly unbounded. In these cases he has real power. Abd ul Kerim, Súliman ibn Mershid, and Feysul ibn Shaalán were of this class; but there is no one at the present moment who can be named with them.

In principle, all the members of a tribe are equal, and the poorest shepherd will speak to his sheykh as to a relation, and by his *Christian name*, but this equality is tempered by the prejudices of birth. Wealth of itself has little power to win respect, but high birth, descent from certain well-known heroes or families of traditional good breeding, is immensely thought of. As the Ánazeh or Shammar is superior to the Jiburi or the Haddadín, so is the Ibn Jéndal or the Ibn Hemázdi superior to the ordinary Ánazeh. Ibn Meziad of the Hesénneh, though a poor man, has the choice of all the sheykhs of the Desert for his sons-in-law, and can command a dowry of fifty camels. I will give a list of the families most esteemed, in the order of rank generally assigned to them.

The Ibn Meziad of the Hesénneh.
The Ibn Jéndal of the Roála.
The Ibn Tayár of the Roála.
The Ibn Hemázdi of the Ibn Haddal.
The Ibn Smeyr of the Welled Ali.

These five, they say, have *from all time* killed a lamb for their guests. Next to these come :

The Ibn Sfúk of the Jerba Shammar.
The Sheykhs of the Taï.*
The Ibn Hedéb of the Moáyaja.
The Roos of the Mehéd.
The Ibn Mershid of the Gomussa.
The Sheykhs of the Moáli ;

and others which I cannot enumerate.

The Ibn Shaalán of the Roála have but a *noblesse d'épée* ; and Jedáan is a *parvenu*.

These however are but social distinctions. Politically and before the law, all members of a tribe are equal, whether high or low born, rich or poor, the only exceptions to this rule being perhaps certain families who are allowed some small privileges in the distribution of spoils of war.

To ascend, next, from the individuals composing the tribe to the tribe itself, it may be stated generally that the same sovereignty, which these possess, is possessed also by the tribe. Each tribe, in fact, is a separate nation with its own rights of peace and war, and its own political independence. Some of them, such as the Roála or the Shammar, are strong enough to stand alone, but most remain grouped together by ties of ancient consanguinity or for mutual protection. Thus the Sebáa consists of

* The family of the Taï Sheykhs and that of the Jerba Shammar are probably equal to the five first mentioned. But I have given them in the order I heard them named among the Ánazeh.

seven independent tribes, each owning its separate Sheykh, and bound together by ties of blood. Each is accounted the equal of its neighbour, and they recognise no common civil authority. They have, however, from time immemorial marched together, and in war time fight under a common leader. The same may be said of the four tribes of the Fedáan, while a still wider consanguinity embraces these and other tribes, including the Roála itself, in the great clan of Ánazeh. It is many years however since the Ánazeh fought together under one common leader. The Shammar, though divided into twenty different sections, each owning a Sheykh, acknowledge one supreme chieftain common to them all, Ibn Sfúk of the Jerba tribe. The Jeláas tribes, in like manner, acknowledge Ibn Shaalán.

In time of war, the authority of the Sheykh, except in civil matters, is superseded by that of a military commander, chosen entirely for his personal merits by the tribe, who becomes at once their leader and commands the obedience of all, even of the Sheykh himself. This officer is called the Akíd or Agíd, (whence the English "guide"), literally the leader; and he is entrusted with all military operations and plans, ghazús, excursions and retreats. He is often the Sheykh himself, but not by any means always so. Sotamm ibn Shaalán, who is certainly Sheykh of the most powerful tribe in the desert, is not their Akíd; and the seven tribes of the Sebáa are at this moment so destitute of mili-

tary talent among themselves, that they have been obliged to take Jedáan, a mere outsider, as their commander. War is so habitual a state of things among the tribes, that the Akíd is a person of the highest importance. On him depend the riches and prosperity of all, and he is treated with the greatest deference.

It will be necessary now to explain something of the causes and conduct of military operations in the desert.

The wars of the Bedouins are neither bloody nor obstinate, though peace may not be formally made for many years. The Ánazeh and Shammar hold themselves, however, to be natural enemies; and no peace is supposed possible between them. There may, indeed, be periods of truce, but these last only so long as the adventurous spirits on either side choose to remain quiet, and do not hinder ghazús and marauding parties being sent across the border. Occasionally individual Sheykhs may come to terms; and it is reported only this summer that Faris Sheykh of the northern Shammar, being pressed by superior forces under his brother's command, has made an alliance with Jedáan, Akíd of the Sebáa; but if true, this is an unexampled event.

The wars which break out between different sections of the Ánazeh are more transitory. These are usually commenced at the instigation of the Turks, whose motto, "divide and rule," leads them to interfere in desert politics. A quarrel is not

difficult to make. A certain tribe has prospered and grown rich in flocks and herds, so that it begins to feel itself cramped for want of space. The Pasha of Damascus or Homs has heard of this, and sends a polite message to the Sheykh, inviting his attendance at the Serai. There he is received with a robe of honour and amiable attentions, and is dazzled, as all Bedouins are, with the power and wealth of settled life. The Pasha asks after the welfare of his tribe, and condoles with him on the lack of pasture, suggesting that there are rich plains further on, occupied indeed by another tribe, but sufficient for both. The Sheykh is flattered and pleased at the idea of Government protection, which the Pasha speedily promises. He returns with presents in his hand to his tents, and tells his people that he is the friend and protégé of the Valy. They readily accept the idea of the new pastures and send him again to the town, this time with a mare for the Pasha's use, and a few dromedaries for his servants. Terms are soon made between the Turk and the Bedouin; and, on a certain sum paid, the pastures are declared by the Pasha to belong to the Sheykh. These are invaded, and war is the result. A few men are killed on either side, and a few mares taken. Then the Turk retires and leaves his friend the Sheykh to fight it out alone.

Such has been the history of half the Bedouin wars of this century, and will be of many more, for history repeats itself in the desert with surprising

rapidity. War, however, is not there the terrible scourge it is among civilised nations. The idea of civilised war is to kill, burn, and utterly destroy your enemy till he submits, but a milder rule is observed in the desert. There the property of the enemy, and not his person, is the object of the fighting. It is not wished that he should be destroyed, only ruined, the extreme penalty of defeat being the loss of flocks and herds, of tents, tent-furniture and mares. Beyond this Bedouin warfare does not go. The person of the enemy is sacred when disarmed or dismounted; and prisoners are neither enslaved nor held to other ransom than their mares. It is very seldom that personal animosity is shown on either side; and no blood is needlessly shed. In the shock of battle a few spear-wounds are exchanged by the more ardent youth, but no man is killed except by accident. Indeed, it is held to be a clumsy act to kill outright, for the object of the fighting is sufficiently obtained by merely dismounting or wounding the enemy. The battle consists, as in heroic times, of a series of single combats, in which the weaker usually flies and is pursued by the stronger. Then it becomes a question of speed with the mares, and of doubling and dodging with their riders. The chase has led the two combatants, it may be, far from the battle; and the pursued begins to fail. He throws himself to the ground and calls "*dahîl!*" "I yield!" Then the pursuer, taking the camel-hair rope, called the

aghál, which is a part of his head-dress, and which in fighting he has hung over his shoulders (for the Bedouins fight bare-headed), he throws it round the neck of the suppliant, and by this act proclaims him captive. His arms and mare then become the property of the captor; and, even if rescued later, the prisoner can take no further part in the fight. If, with his surrender, his mare is captured, he is then let go, to find the best of his way back to his own people on foot; but, if the mare escape or be rescued, then the prisoner must accompany his captor to the tent of the latter, where he is hospitably entertained, but held to ransom until such time as the mare can be delivered. Afterwards he is free to depart.*

The reason why life is seldom taken in war must be looked for, partly in the fact that firearms are not in general use, partly in the custom of claiming, on the conclusion of peace, damages for each death. A tribe which has a balance of fifty lives to account for, may have a heavy ransom to pay at the end of the war. The mares taken are also sometimes restored by the articles of the peace; but this is not usual. The captors of them are generally anxious to sell or exchange them with tribes not concerned in the war, so as to avoid the possibility of such restoration. When accounts are settled the blood money, *hak el dam*, is paid in camels,—fifty I believe,

* Sometimes the prisoner, on taking oath before two witnesses that he will send his mare, and always if he have no mare, is at once released.

for each death, as in the case of homicide; but the individual slayer is not personally liable for the amount, which is levied on the whole tribe. Death in war does not entail a blood feud with the family of the deceased; but, if a man is killed in war by one with whom he is at feud, his death is held to count in the quarrel.

Though this is the usual humane rule in war, yet it appears that the life of the Sheykh of a tribe may occasionally be taken without his "dahîl" being accepted. Thus Meshúr's father, Mitbakh-ibn-Mershid, was slain by a party of Roála, who met him in superior force while the Sebáa and the Roála were at war. Mitbakh fled, and being well mounted would no doubt have escaped, but that his mare tripped in a jerboa-hole, and fell with him. Then, though disarmed and dismounted, several of the Roála fell upon him and cut him down. This, however, is a very unusual instance, and so is what followed; for the Sebáa were so enraged at their chief's death that they hamstrung the mare, which had caused his fall, and which had followed them in their flight. In this case a blood feud has been the result between the Ibn Mershids and the Ibn Shaaláns, a fact which seems to show that the death of Mitbakh was considered irregular. Five lives of the Ibn Shaaláns have been taken in return for it, the last by our young friend Meshúr only a few months ago. A Sheykh's life counts for no more than that of any ordinary person, but on this occa-

sion five lives were claimed, because five men of the Roála had taken part in killing Mitbakh.

The tales of throat-cutting told by Mr. Palgrave and others may be true of the tribes he visited, but are not true of the Ánazeh or Shammar. The report of prisoners having been thus murdered by the Roála, which reached us at Aleppo, turned out on investigation to be entirely unfounded, and the event justified the disbelief in them at the time by all who knew the Bedouins.

SHERIFA.

MEASUREMENTS OF SHERIFA'S HEAD.

1. *Length*, from between the ears to the point of the muzzle, 24 inches.

2. *Circumference*, round the forehead and jowl, 36 inches.
3. *Circumference* of muzzle, 14½ inches.

4. *Width*, between cheek-bones, 5½ inches.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON HORSES.

"A neighing quadruped, used in war, and draught and carriage."
JOHNSON.

Arab horse-breeding—Obscurity respecting it—There is no Nejdean breed—Picture of the Ánazeh horse—He is a bold jumper—Is a fast horse for his size—His nerve excellent, and his temper—Causes of deterioration—How the Bedouins judge a horse—Their system of breeding and training—Their horsemanship indifferent—Their prejudices—Pedigree of the thoroughbred Arabian horse.

CONSIDERING the obscurity in which the whole subject of Arab horse-breeding is hidden in England, I trust that I shall be excused for venturing to give a slight sketch of this interesting subject. It was one that engaged our attention more than any other on our late journey, and which we took especial pains to understand in principle as well as in detail.

It is singular that former travellers should not have attempted this. Niebuhr and Burckhardt, exhaustive as they generally are, are silent here, or tell us little that is correct, while later travellers, either from lack of interest or lack of knowledge, ignore

the subject altogether. Mr. Palgrave, in his contempt of all things Bedouin, disposes of the Anazeh horses in a few sentences, which reveal his little acquaintance with his subject, and repeats a fantastic account of the Royal Stables at Riad and the tale of a distinct Nejdean breed existing there, a tale which so far as I could learn no Bedouin north of Jebel Shammar believes a word of. Mr. Palgrave must have been deceived on this point by the townsmen of Riad, for the northern Bedouins know Ibn Saoud perfectly by name and know of his mares. But they all assert that the Riad stud is quite a modern collection, got together by Feysul and acquired principally from themselves. Abdallah-ibn-Feysul-ibn-Saoud still sends to the Anazeh for additions to it from time to time; and I know of one instance in which he sent four mares from Riad as far as Aleppo to a celebrated horse standing there.

General Daumas's book on the horses of the Sahara does not do more than touch on those of Arabia; and, with the exception of an Italian work which I have heard of, but which is out of print, I know of nothing on the subject better than Captain Upton's pamphlet called "Newmarket and Arabia." This, with some really interesting facts and generally correct notions, is but a sketch taken from information gained at second hand. The pamphlet, as far as it relates to Arabia, consists mainly of a discussion as to what sort of horse it was Noah took with him

into the ark, and where the horse went after he was let out of it.*

Not to go back so far as that, I think we may be content with accepting the usual belief that Arabia was one of the countries where the horse was originally found in his wild state, and where he was first caught and tamed. By Arabia, however, I would not imply the peninsula, which, according to every account we have of it, is not at all a country suited to the horse in his natural condition. There is no water above ground in Nejd, nor any pasture fit for horses except during the winter months; and the mares kept by the Bedouins there are fed, during part of the year at least, on dates and camel's milk. Every authority agrees on this point. The Nejd horses are of pure blood, because of the isolation of the peninsula, but Nejd is not a country naturally fitted for horses, and the want of proper food has stunted the breed. Nejd bred horses are neither so tall nor so fast as those of the Hamád, although the blood is the same. Dr. Colvill, who went to Riad in 1854, assures me that he saw but one single mare during the whole of his journey there and back, and that that was a small insignificant animal. He has seen, however, ponies of thirteen hands in El Hasa which he de-

* Since writing the above I have been shown an article in *Fraser's Magazine* of September, 1876, in which Captain Upton corrects his original impressions about Arabian horse-breeding, in consequence of a visit paid by him to the Sebáa, Moali and other tribes in the neighbourhood of Aleppo. The account thus corrected is exceedingly good, though it still contains not a few mistakes.

scribes as "little lions," of great power and beauty; the "tattoes" of the Indian market.

It is not then in the peninsula of Arabia, where water is only to be had from wells, that the original stock can have been found, but rather in Mesopotamia and the great pastoral districts bordering the Euphrates, where water is abundant and pasture perennial. I was constantly struck, when crossing the plains of Mesopotamia, with its resemblance to Entrerios, and the other great horse-producing regions of the River Plate. Here the wild horse must have been originally captured, (just as in the present day the *wâhush* or wild ass is captured,) and taken thence by man to people the peninsula.

Later on, invasions from the north seem to have brought other breeds of horses to these very plains, members perhaps of other original stocks, those of the Russian steppes or of Central Asia. These we find represented on the Chaldean bas-reliefs, and still existing in the shape of stout ponies all along the northern edge of the desert—animals disowned by the Bedouins as being horses at all, yet serviceable for pack work, and useful in their way. This Chaldean type, from whatever source it springs, stands in direct contrast with that of the true Arabian. It is large-headed, heavy-necked, straight-shouldered, and high on the leg—a lumbering clumsy beast, fit rather for draught, if it were large enough, than for riding; and in this way the ancient Chaldeans seem to have chiefly employed it. The desert, however,

has always preserved its own breed intact; and wherever the Bedouin is found, whether in Nejd or in the Hamád or Mesopotamia, the same animal, with the same traditions and the same prejudices concerning him, is to be found. It is of this animal only that I propose to speak.

The pure bred Bedouin horse stands from fourteen to fifteen hands in height, the difference depending mainly on the country in which he is bred, and the amount of good food he is given as a colt. In shape he is like our English thoroughbred, his bastard cousin, but with certain differences. The principal of these is, as might be expected, in the head, for where there is a mixture of blood the head almost always follows the least beautiful type of the ancestors. Thus, every horse with a cross of Spanish blood will retain the heavy head of that breed, though he have but one-sixteenth part of it to fifteen of a better strain. The head of the Arabian is larger in proportion than that of the English thoroughbred, the chief difference lying in the depth of jowl. This is very marked, as is also the width between the cheek-bones where the English horse is often defective to the cost of his windpipe. The ears are fine and beautifully shaped, but not very small. The eye is large and mild, the forehead prominent as in horses of the Touchstone blood with us, and the muzzle fine, sometimes almost pinched. Compared with the Arabian, the English thoroughbred is Roman nosed. The head, too, and this is perhaps the most dis-

tinguishing feature, is set on at a different angle. When I returned to England the thoroughbreds seemed to me to hold their heads as if tied in with a bearing rein, and to have no throat whatever, the cause perhaps of that tendency to roaring so common with them.

The neck of the Arabian horse is light, and I have never seen among them anything approaching to the crest given by his pictures, to the Godolphin Arabian. The shoulder is good, as good as in our own horses and the wither is often as high, although from the greater height of the hind-quarter this is not so apparent. The forearm in the best specimens is of great strength, the muscle standing out with extraordinary prominence. The back is shorter than it is in our thoroughbreds, and the barrel rounder. The Arabian is well ribbed up. He stands higher at the croup than at the wither. The tail is set on higher, but not, as I have heard some people say, on a level with the croup. Indeed, the jumping bone, to use an Irish phrase, is often very prominent. The tail is carried high, both walking and galloping; and this point is much looked to, as a sign of breeding. I have seen mares gallop with their tails as straight as a colt's, and fit, as the Arabs say, to hang your cloak on.

The hind-quarter in the Arabian is much narrower than in our horses, another point of breeding, which indicates speed rather than strength. The line of the hind-quarter is finer, the action freer, and the

upper limb longer in proportion than in the English racehorse. The hocks are larger, better let down, and not so straight. The cannon bone is shorter. The legs are strong, but with less bone in proportion than back sinew. This last is perhaps the finest point of the Arabian, in whom a "breakdown" seldom or never occurs. The bones of the pastern joints are fine, sometimes too fine for strength, and the pastern itself is long even to weakness. Its length is a point much regarded by the Arabs as a sign of speed. The hoofs are round and large, and very hard, though, from the barbarous method of shoeing and paring of the foot practised by the desert blacksmiths, a stranger might doubt this. The toe is often cut ludicrously short, out of economy, to save frequent shoeing.

The only defect of the Arabian as a racehorse, compared with our own, is his small size. Inch for inch there can be no question which is the faster horse.

It is commonly said in England that the Arabian has but one pace, the gallop; and in a certain sense this is true. Trotting is discouraged by the Bedouin colt-breakers, who, riding on an almost impossible pad, and without stirrups, find that pace inconvenient. But with a little patience, the deficiency can easily be remedied, and good shoulder action given. No pure bred Arabian however is a high stepper. His style of galloping is long and low, the counterpart of our English thoroughbred's. He is a careless but by no means a bad or dangerous walker. It is con-

sidered a great point of breeding that a horse should look about him to right and left as he walks; and this, combined with the great length of his pasterns, makes him liable to trip on even ground, if there are slight inequalities in his road. I have never however seen him even in danger of falling. The horse is too sure of his footing to be careful, except on rough ground, and then he never makes a false step. The broken knees one comes across are almost always the result of galloping colts before they are strong enough over rocky ground, and, though a fearful disfigurement in our eyes, are thought nothing of by the Bedouins. The reputation, so often given to the Arabian, of being a slow walker, is the reverse of true. Though less fast than the Barb, he walks well beyond the average pace of our own horses. His gallop, as I have said, is long and low, and faster *in proportion to his height*, than that of any other breed. If one could conceive an Arabian seventeen hands high, he could not fail to leave the best horse in England behind him. As it is, he is too small to keep stride with our race-horses.

The Arabian is a bold jumper, indeed the boldest in the world. Though in their own country they had had absolutely no knowledge of fences, not one of the mares we brought home with us has made any difficulty about going at the fences we tried them at. One of them, the evening of her arrival in England, on being let loose in the park, cleared the fence which is five feet six inches high. We

pulled down the lower rails after this, and walked her back under the top one, a thick oak rail which was several inches higher than her wither. Another, though only fourteen hands two inches, clears seven yards in her stride over a hurdle. The mare I rode on the journey, carried me over the raised watercourses by the Euphrates in the cleverest way in the world, off and on without the least hanging or hesitation, and always with a foot ready to bring down in case of need. As hunters, however, in England, they would all be too small for any but children to ride, and their want of comparative height at the wither would be a serious defect.

Of their galloping powers, as compared with those of English thoroughbreds, I cannot speak from experience. I do not, however, suppose that over three miles, the longest English race, an Arabian would have much chance against any but quite inferior animals. Over five miles it might be different, but over twenty I am convinced that none but very exceptional English horses, would be able to go with them. The Arabians seem capable of going on for surprising distances, under heavy weights, without tiring; and they have the advantage of being able to stand almost any amount of training without going "stale." The thoroughbred Anazeh horse will train as fine as any English racehorse. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the pure bred Arabian possesses extraordinary powers of endurance. On a journey he may be ridden day after day, and fed only upon

grass. Yet he does not lose heart or condition, and is always ready to gallop at the end of the longest march, a thing we have never ventured to propose to our horses on any previous journey.

In disposition the Arabians are gentle and affectionate, familiar indeed almost to the extent of being troublesome. They have no fear of man whatsoever, and will allow anyone to come up to them when grazing, and take them by the head. If they happen to be lying down, they will not move though you come close to them. They are not to be intimidated by any lifting up of hands or sticks, for they do not understand that you can hurt them. It often amused us in the desert to see the mares come up to their masters and use them, as they would one of themselves, for a rubbing-post. This extreme gentleness and courage, though partly the effect of education, is also inherited, for a colt born and brought up in the stable is just as tame. It never thinks, as English colts do, of running round behind its dam for protection, but comes at once to anyone who enters the box.

I have never seen an Arabian vicious, shy, or showing signs of fear. They do not wince at firearms, though they are not at all accustomed to them; and in England no railway train or sudden noise gives them the least alarm. In this they are very different from Barbs, Turks, and all other foreign horses I have had to do with.

There is among English people a general idea that

grey, especially flea-bitten grey, is the commonest Arabian colour. But this is not so among the Ánazeh. Bay is still more common, and white horses, though fashionable in the desert, are rare. Our white Hamdaníych mare, Sherífa, which came from Nejd, was immensely admired among the Gomussa for the sake of her colour almost as much as for her head, which is indeed of extraordinary beauty. The drawing at the beginning of this chapter is her very faithful portrait. Perhaps out of a hundred mares among the Ánazeh one would see thirty-five bay, thirty grey, fifteen chestnut, and the rest brown or black. Roans, piebalds, duns, and yellows, are not found among the pure bred Arabians, though the last two occasionally are among Barbs. The bays often have black points and generally a white foot, or two or three white feet, and a snip or blaze down the face. The chestnuts vary from the brightest to the dullest shades, and I once saw a mottled brown. The tallest and perhaps handsomest horse we saw was a Samhan-el-Gomeáa, a three-year-old bay with black points, standing about fifteen hands one inch. He was a little clumsy, however, in his action, though that may have been the fault of his breaking. He had bone enough to satisfy all requirements, even those of a Yorkshire man, but showed no sign of lacking quality. With very few exceptions, all the handsomest mares we saw were bay, which is without doubt by far the best colour in Arabia as it is in England. The chestnuts, as with us, are hot tem-

pered, even violent. Black is a rare colour, and I never saw in the desert a black mare which I fancied. In choosing Arabians I should take none but bays, and if possible bays with black points.

It must not be supposed that there are many first-class mares among the Bedouins. During all our travels we saw but one which answered to the ideal we had formed, an Abéyeh Sherrak of the Gomussa. Nor were there many which approached her. Among the Shammar we saw only two first-class mares, among the Fedáan perhaps half a dozen, and among the Roála, once the leading tribe in horse-breeding, none. The Gomussa alone, of all the Anazeh, have any large number of really fine mares. We had an excellent opportunity of judging, for we were with the Gomussa when fighting was going on, and when every man among them was mounted on his mare. I do not consider that we saw more than twenty "*fók el aali*," or, to translate it literally, "tip-top" mares, nor more than fifty which we should have cared to possess. I doubt if there are two hundred really first-class mares in the whole of Northern Arabia. By this I of course do not mean first-class in point of blood, for animals of the purest strains are still fairly numerous, but first-class in quality and appearance as well as blood.

I cannot help suspecting that a certain amount of deterioration has taken place within the last fifty, perhaps the last twenty years. There is no

doubt that in the early years of the present century, the Roála were possessed of immense numbers of mares, and had the reputation of having the monopoly of some of the best strains of blood. It was to their Sheykh, Ibn Shaalán, whom he called the "Prince of the Desert," that Abbas Pasha sent his son to be educated, and from them that he bought most of the mares, of which he made such a wonderful collection. Yet from one cause and another the Roála, though still rich and powerful, have now no mares to speak of. They have within the last few years abandoned the old Bedouin warfare with the lance, and taken to fire-arms. Horses are no longer indispensable to them, and have been recklessly sold. The Shammar of Mesopotamia have suffered for the last two generations by the semi-Turkism of their Sheykhs, Sfuk and Ferhán, and have been divided by internal dissensions to such an extent, that their enemies, the Anazeh, have greatly reduced them. Abbas Pasha also bought up many fine mares from among them at extravagant prices; and they now have not a single specimen among them of the Seglawi Jedrán breed, for which they were formerly famous. The Montefik in the south, once also celebrated for their horses, have allowed the purity of their breed to be tampered with, for the sake of increased size, so necessary for the Indian market which they supplied. It was found that a cross-bred animal of mixed Persian and Arabian blood, would pass

muster among the English in India as pure Arabian, and would command a better price from his extra height. The Persian or Turcoman horse stands fifteen hands two inches, or even, I am told, sixteen hands; and these the Montifik have used to cross their mares with. The produce is known in India as the Gulf Arab, but his inferior quality is now recognised. Lastly, among the Sebáa themselves, who have maintained the ancient breeds in all their integrity, various accidents have concurred in diminishing the number of their mares. Several seasons of drought and famine, within the last fifteen years, have reduced the prosperity of the tribes, and forced them to part with some of their best breeding stock. Many a valuable mare was thus sold, because her owner had no choice but to do so or to let her starve, while others, left "on halves" with inhabitants of the small towns, never returned to the desert. Mijuel, of the Misrab, told me of a mare of his, which he had been obliged to leave in this way with a townsman, and which, from having been left standing a whole year in a filthy stable, had become foundered in all four feet and could not be removed. Finally the continual wars, which for years past have devastated the tribes, have caused an immense consumption of horses. When a mare is taken in war she is usually galloped into the nearest town, and sold hurriedly by her captor, for what she will fetch, for fear of her being reclaimed when peace is made. While

we were at Aleppo, mares were thus every day brought for us to look at, terribly knocked about, and often with fresh spear-wounds gaping on flank or shoulder.

Besides all these reasons, the Bedouin system of breeding, as at present practised among the Ánazeh and Shammar, *must* have had a degenerating effect upon their blood stock, which is only now beginning to show its results. That this system has in most of its features been the same from time immemorial in Arabia, is no doubt true, but there is one point on which it is more likely the practice has been modified by recent circumstances. In former times when the tribes were rich and prosperous, it cannot be doubted, but they kept a larger proportion of horses as compared with mares than is now seen. At the present time there can hardly be more than one full-grown horse kept for stud purposes to every two hundred mares. Indeed, the proportion is probably far smaller, and this fact alone is sufficient to account for much of the barrenness and much of the inferiority of the produce, complained of in the desert. In England such a proportion would not be tolerated. Then, if there be any truth in the doctrine that in-and-in breeding is wrong, this too may be looked upon as an increasing evil in the desert. The Shammar have long been separated from the rest of Arabia, and, though occasionally recruiting their breeding stock by capture from the Ánazeh, they have been for a couple

of hundred years practically cut off from all communication with other horse-breeders. They have despised the horses of their Kurdish and Persian neighbours too thoroughly to allow any infusion of blood from them, and thus have been forced to breed in-and-in during all these generations. The Ánazeh, too, though not so absolutely severed from Central Arabia, have, since the reduction of Jebel Shammar by the Wahabis, been precluded from free communication with the peninsula, and have become more and more isolated; and the evil has been exaggerated by the extraordinary fanaticism shown by both Ánazeh and Shammar in favour of certain special strains of blood which monopolise their attention. At the present moment all the blood stock of the Ánazeh tribes must be related in the closest degrees of consanguinity. That this fanaticism operates most injuriously there can hardly be a doubt. The horses bred from are not chosen for their size or their shape, or for any quality of speed or stoutness, only for their blood. We saw a horse with a considerable reputation as a sire, among the Aghedaat, for no other reason than that he was a Maneghi Hedruj of Ibn Sbeyel's strain. The animal himself was a mere pony, without a single good point to recommend him, but his blood was unexceptionable, and he was looked upon with awe by the tribe.

These two points then, the insufficiency of stud horses and in-and-in breeding, may be looked upon

as exceptional, yet adequate causes of degeneracy among the rank and file of the Bedouin horses north of Jebel Shammar.

It is difficult to understand how it happens that the pure Arabian race should have in fact retained as much of its good quality as it has. In all ages and in all parts of Arabia, to say nothing of the points I have already mentioned, an unpractical system of breeding has prevailed, due in part to prejudice, and in part to peculiarities of climate and soil. To begin with, there has been the extraordinary prejudice of blood I have spoken of, and which, though doubtless an excellent one as between pure Arabians and "*kadishes*," is hardly valid as between the different strains of pure blood. An inferior specimen of a favourite strain is probably preferred all over Arabia to a fine specimen of a lower strain, or rather of a less fashionable one. Thus the Bedouin's judgment of the individual horse itself, when he does judge it, is rather a guess at his pedigree than a consideration of his qualities. In examining a horse, the Bedouin looks first at his head. There, if anywhere, the signs of his parentage will be visible. Then, maybe, he looks at his colour to see if he have any special marks for recognition, and last of all at his shape.

Of the speed of the animal, though much is talked of it, it is seldom that anything accurate is known. The Bedouins have no set races by which they can judge of this, and the relative

merits of their mares can hardly be guessed at in the fantasias where they figure. Even in war it is rather a question of endurance, than of speed, which is the better animal; and, where a real flight and a real pursuit takes place, the course is so seldom a straight one, that it is as often that the best trained or the best ridden mare gets the advantage, as the one which really has the speed. A mare, celebrated for speed in the desert, is as often as not merely a very well-broken charger. The Bedouins have, moreover, no idea, even if they had the intention, of riding their horses so as to give them full advantage of their stride. They must be very hard pressed indeed, if they keep on at a steady gallop for more than a mile or two together. Their parties and expeditions, even where haste is necessary, are constantly interrupted by halts and dismountings; and a steady pace all day long is a thing not to be thought of. They go, however, immense distances in this way, cantering and stopping and cantering again, and are out sometimes for a whole month together, during which time their mares are very insufficiently fed, and often kept for days at a time without water. They are also exposed to every hardship in the way of climate, heat, and cold, and pitiless wind. The mares then, depend rather on stoutness and long endurance of privations, than on speed, for finding favour with their masters.

The education they receive, no doubt, prepares

them for this, but at the same time it interferes with their growth, and prevents them from developing the full powers of strength and speed they might otherwise acquire. The colt, as soon as it is born, and this may be at any time of the year (for the Bedouins have no prejudice in favour of early foaling), is fastened, by a cord tied either round the neck or round the hind leg above the hock, to a tent-rope, and kept thus close to the tent all day, its dam going out the while to pasture. The little creature by this early treatment becomes extraordinarily tame, suffering itself to be handled at once and played with by the children. It is fed, as soon as it can be made to drink, on camel's milk, which the Bedouins pretend will give it the endurance of that beast; and, at any rate by the end of the month, it is weaned altogether from the mare. The real reason of this can hardly be the good of the foal, but the necessity of making use of the mare for riding. The Bedouins allow at most a month before and a month after foaling for rest. The colt then has not the advantage we think so essential to proper growth, of running with its mother during its first season. It continues, however, quite tame, and, as soon as it is a year old, is mounted a little by the children, and later on by any boy who is a light weight. The Bedouins declare that, unless a colt has done really hard work before he is three years old, he will never be fit to do it afterwards; so in the course

of his third year he is taken on expeditions, not perhaps serious ghazús, where he would run some risk of breaking down or being captured, but on minor journeys; and he is taught to gallop in the figure of eight, and change his legs so as to grow supple. This treatment is indeed a kill or cure one; and, if the colt gets through it, there is little fear of his breaking down afterwards. It is seldom that one sees a three-year old without splints, though curbs and spavins are not common. I have seen several animals with the shank bone permanently bent, through hard work when very young. I agree, however, with the Bedouins, in believing that to their general health and powers of endurance this early training is necessary. The fillies go through the same course of treatment, and themselves become mothers before they are four years old. The colts are sold off when opportunity offers to the townsmen of Deyr, Aleppo or Mosul, as the case may be, or to dealers who come round to the tents of the tribes, during their summer stay in the extreme north. The best are usually taken by the townsmen, as the dealers, especially those who supply the Indian market, seldom or never purchase *hadúd* colts. These cost about three times as much as the others, and it is easy to forge a pedigree. The townsmen, particularly those of Deyr, who are almost Bedouins themselves, know the difference well, and care for nothing but the best. Others are sold to the low tribes, who take

them in to the towns for further sale, as soon as they have broken them. The fillies are generally kept in the tribe.

Of diseases there are few among the Bedouin horses. I have never heard of an instance of roaring, and only once of broken wind. An accident known as "twisted gut," is, however, rather common, and some other diseases of an inflammatory nature which prove suddenly fatal. Horses, mares, colts, and all alike are starved during great part of the year, no corn being ever given, and only camel's milk when other food fails. They are often without water for several days together, and in the most piercing nights of winter they stand uncovered, and with no more shelter than can be got on the lee side of the tents. Their coats become long and shaggy, and they are left uncombed and unbrushed till the new coat comes in spring. At these times they are ragged-looking scarecrows, half-starved, and as rough as ponies. In the summer, however, their coats are as fine as satin, and they show all the appearance of breeding one has a right to expect of their blood.

The Bedouin never uses a bit or bridle of any sort, but instead, a halter with a fine chain passing round the nose. With this he controls his mare easily and effectually. He rides on a pad of cotton, fastened on the mare's back by a surcingle, and uses no stirrups. This pad is the most uncomfortable and insecure seat imaginable, but fortunately

the animals are nearly always gentle and without vice. I have never seen either violent plunging, rearing, or indeed any serious attempt made to throw the rider. Whether the Bedouin would be able to sit a bare-backed unbroken four-year old colt, as the gauchos of South America do, is exceedingly doubtful.

The Bedouin has none of the arts of the horse-dealer. He knows little of showing off a horse, or even of making him stand to advantage, but, however anxious he may be to sell him, brings him just as he is, dirty and ragged, tired, and perhaps broken-kneed. He has a supreme contempt himself for everything except blood in his beast, and he expects everybody else to have the same. He knows nothing of the simple art of telling a horse's age by the teeth, and still less of any dealer's trick in the way of false marking. This comes from the fact that in the tribe, each colt's age is a matter of public notoriety. We avoided, as much as possible, having direct commercial dealings with our friends in the desert, but, from all we heard and the little we saw of such transactions, it is evidently very difficult to strike a satisfactory bargain. As soon as one price is fixed, another is substituted; and, unless the intending purchaser rides resolutely away, there is no chance of the bargain being really concluded. Once done, however, and the money counted and re-counted by half a dozen disinterested friends, the horse or mare may be led away. I do not think

the Bedouins have in general much personal love for their mares, only a great deal of pride in them, and a full sense of their value.

As I have already said, they will not tell a falsehood in respect of the breeding of their animals, a habit partly due to the honour in which all things connected with horseflesh are held, partly, too, no doubt, to the public notoriety of the breed or breeds in each family, which would at once expose the falsehood; and public opinion is severe on this head.

Having premised thus much of the general characteristics of the thoroughbred Arabian, I will now explain what I have been able to discover of his pedigree.

PEDIGREE OF THE ARABIAN HORSE.

Tradition states that the first horse-tamer was Ismaïl-ibn-Ibrahim, or Ishmael, who, after he was turned out of his father's tents, captured a mare from among a herd which he found running wild, "*mittl wáhash*" (like the wild ass). The Emir Abd-el-Kader, in confirming this story, told me that the children of Ishmael had a mare from this principal stock which grew up crooked, for she had been foaled on a journey and, being unable to travel, had been sewn into a *khourj*, or goat's-hair sack, and placed upon a camel. From her descended a special strain of blood, known as the *Benat-el-Ahwaj*, or "daughters of the crooked," and this

was the first distinction made by the Bedouins among their horses.

The *Benat-el-Ahwaj*, or *Ahwaj*, as it is more commonly called, may therefore be considered the oldest breed known. I have never heard of it in the Arabian deserts, but the Emir assures me that it exists under that name in the Sahara; and that the breeds now recognised in Arabia are but ramifications of this original stock.

It is difficult to give more than a guess as to the antiquity of the names now in use. The five breeds known as the *Khamsa* are not possessed by the tribes of Northern Africa; and it is therefore probable, that at the time of the first Arabian conquests (in the 7th and 8th centuries of our era), they had not yet become distinguished from the general stock. The Emir, however, does not doubt of their extreme antiquity, and I think it is certain that the Kehilans must have been contemporary with Mahomet; for a breed called Koklani exists in Persia, and we may fairly suppose it to have been brought there by the early Arabian invaders. It has not, however, been kept pure in Persia.

The Kehilans, then, we may presume, were an early sub-breed of the Ahwaj, receiving their name from the black marks certain Arabian horses have round their eyes; marks which give them the appearance of being painted with kohl, after the fashion of the Arab women. Or, indeed, "Kehilan"

may be merely a new name for the Ahwaj, used first as an epithet, but afterwards superseding the older name in Arabia. This supposition is favoured by Niebuhr, who evidently treats the Kochlani, as he calls them, as the generic name of the pure Bedouin race, as contrasted with the Kadíshes or town horses of the peninsula.

"The Kochlani," he says, "are reserved for riding solely. They are said to derive their origin from King Solomon's studs. However this may be, they are fit to bear the greatest fatigues * * *. The Kochlani are neither large nor handsome"—(It must be remembered that Niebuhr was a Dane, and took his ideas of beauty in all probability from the great Flanders' horses ridden by our ancestors. The Eastern breed in his day, more than a hundred years ago, was hardly yet quite established even in England),—"but amazingly swift; it is not for their figure, but for their velocity and other good qualities that the Arabians esteem them. These Kochlani are chiefly bred by the Bedouins settled between Basra Merdin and Syria, in which countries the nobility never choose to ride horses of any other race. The whole race is divided into several families, each of which has its proper name; that of Dsjulfa seems to be the most numerous. Some of these families have a higher reputation than others, on account of their more ancient and uncontaminated nobility. Although it is known by experience, that the Kochlani are often inferior to the Kadischi, yet the

mares at least, of the former, are always preferred, in the hopes of a fine progeny.

"The Arabians have indeed no tables of genealogy to prove the descent of their Kochlani; yet they are sure of the legitimacy of the progeny; for a mare of this race is never covered unless in the presence of witnesses, who must be Arabians. This people do not indeed always stickle at perjury; but in a case of such serious importance, they are careful to deal conscientiously. There is no instance of false testimony given in respect to the descent of a horse. Every Arabian is persuaded that himself and his whole family would be ruined, if he should prevaricate in giving his oath in an affair of such consequence.

"The Arabians make no scruple of selling their Kochlani stallions like other horses; but they are unwilling to part with their mares for money. When not in a condition to support them, they dispose of them to others, on the terms of having a share in the foals, or of being at liberty to recover them after a certain time.

"These Kochlani are much like the old Arabian nobility, the dignity of whose birth is held in no estimation unless in their own country. These horses are little valued by the Turks. Their country being more fertile, better watered, and less level, swift horses are less necessary to them than to the Arabians. They prefer large horses, who have a stately appearance when sumptuously harnessed.

It should seem that there are also Kochlani in Hedsjas and in the country of Dsjof; but I doubt if they be in estimation in the domains of the Imam, where the horses of men of rank appeared to me too handsome to be Kochlani. The English, however, sometimes purchase these horses at the price of 800 or 1000 crowns each. An English merchant was offered at Bengal twice the purchase-money for one of these horses; but he sent him to England, where he hoped that he would draw four times the original price."

I have given this extract almost *in extenso*, as it is interesting in spite of some blunders, which are easily explained by the fact that Niebuhr never visited the great horse-breeding tribes. It shows, at any rate, that the names of the breeds were at that time as clearly established as now, and that these are in no wise a mere modern invention, as some assert, got up by horse-dealers for the benefit of Englishmen in India. The notion of such an imposture is not to be entertained by anyone who has conversed, even for half an hour, on horseflesh with a Bedouin. The fanatics about breeding are not the English but the Bedouins themselves; and it is inconceivable these can have been converted by any conspiracy of horse-dealers. An equally absurd idea, also current in India, is that the Anazeh breed has within the last sixty or seventy years received an infusion of English blood. Some talk of English thoroughbred horses, left by the

French under Napoleon in Egypt, others of horses introduced into Syria forty years ago, but nobody who knows anything of the Ánazeh can for an instant conceive that the existence of any number of English thoroughbreds at Damascus or Cairo, would have the slightest influence on their own breeding stock. By the Ánazeh the finest horse that ever ran at Newmarket would be accounted a mere *kadish*, and would not even be looked at for stud purposes.*

But to resume. The Kehîlans, whenever first so called, have been without doubt a recognised breed in Arabia for many centuries, and were in all probability the parent stock which produced the other four great strains of blood, which with the Kehîlan make up the Khamsa. These also have existed as distinct breeds in Arabia from "time immemorial," but whether that means one hundred or five hundred, or a thousand years, it is quite impossible to say. The common belief of their descent from the five mares of Solomon is of course a fable,† and is not much talked of in the desert itself.

* Some thoroughbreds brought by Mr. Skene to Aleppo eighteen or twenty years ago were laughed at by the Arabs even of the towns, and no one dreamed of sending his mares to them. Prejudice was too strong. We took great pains, while travelling with the Ánazeh, to ascertain what they knew of our English thoroughbred stock, but with the exception of Mr. Skene's they had never heard of any, and laughed heartily at the idea of any mixture with them or other kadishes having been permitted.

† Abd-el-Kader told me that these five mares were *Benat-el-Ahwaj*, purchased by Solomon of the Ishmaelites, and that one of

The names of the Khamsa, or five great strains of blood (originally Ahwaj, and possibly all Kehîlan,) are as follows:—

1. KEHÎLAN, *fem. Kehîleh* (or *Kehîlet* before a vowel).

This strain is the most numerous, and, taken generally, the most esteemed. It contains a greater proportion, I think, of bays than any other strain. The Kehîlans are the fastest, though not perhaps the hardiest horses, and bear a closer resemblance than the rest to English thoroughbreds, to whom indeed they are more nearly related. The Darley Arabian, perhaps the only *thoroughbred* Ánazeh horse in our stud book, was a Kehîlan. The Kehîlan is not by any means the most beautiful of the strains. Its subdivisions are very numerous, and will be given in the list at the end of this chapter. The favourite substrains are the Kehîlan Ajúz, the Kehîlan Nowag, the Kehîlan Abu Argúb, Abu Jenúb, and Ras-el-Fedawi.

2. SEGLAWI, *fem. Seglawíeh.*

One strain of this blood, the Seglawi Jedrán, is considered the best of all in the desert; and the Seglawis generally are held in high repute. They are, however, comparatively rare, and exist only in a few families of the Ánazeh. Among the Shammar there are Seglawis, but no Seglawi Jedráns, the last mares of this breed having been bought up at fabulous prices by Abbas Pasha. The four strains, Jedrán, Obeyrán, Arjébi and el-Abd are identical in origin, being descended from four Seglawi mares, sisters—but only the first has been kept absolutely pure. Even the Seglawi Jedrán is to be found pure in the families of Ibn Nedéri and Ibn Sbeni only. The Seglawi Obeyrán has been crossed with the Kehîlans and other strains, and the

them, the most celebrated, was given by him to the Sheykh of the Uzd, in which tribe her descendants are still found. She was called *Zad-el-Musáfir* (food for the traveller) on account of her being fast enough to run down the gazelle.

El Abd though purer than the Obeyrán is yet not absolutely so even in the family of Ibn Shaalán, where it is at its best. The Seglawi Jedrán of Ibn Nedéri is powerful and fast, but not particularly handsome. Ibn Sbeni's strain is more perfect in appearance, and of equal purity.

3. ABÉYAN, *fem. Abéych.*

The Abéyan is generally the handsomest breed, but is small and has less resemblance to the English thoroughbred than either of the preceding. The Abéyan Sherrák is the substrain most appreciated, and an Abéyan Sherrák we saw at Aleppo, bred by the Gomussa, could not have been surpassed in good looks. He was not however of a racing type. Again an Abéych Sherrák mare belonging to Beteyen ibn Mershid was the most perfect mare we saw. But her sire was a Kehîlan Ajúz. The pure Abéyan Sherrák strain is only found in the family of Abu Jeréys of the Meséka, and in a single family of the Jelâas.

4. HAMDÁNI, *fem. Hamdanieh,*

is not a common breed either among the Ánazeh or Shammar. Most of the animals of this breed I have seen have been grey, but a very handsome brown horse was shown us by the Gomussa. This was a Hamdáni Simri, which is the only substrain recognised as *hadûd*. The very beautiful white mare, Sherîfa, which we had with us on the latter part of our journey, was a Hamdanieh Simri. She was bred in Nejd, and had been in the possession of Ibn Saoud. Her head is the most perfect of any I have seen. She stands fourteen hands two inches, and is pure white in colour, with the kohl patches round the eyes and nose very strongly and blackly marked. Her ears are long like a hind's, and her eyes as full and soft. She was admired all over the desert. In shape, head apart, she is more like an English hunter than a racehorse.

5. HÁDBAN, *fem. Hádbbeh,*

also uncommon among the Ánazeh, the best having formerly been possessed by the Roála. Hádban Enzekhi is the best sub-

strain, and to it belonged a remarkable mare owned by Mohammed Jirro at Deyr. She stood about fourteen hands two and a-half inches, was a bay with black points, carried her tail very high, and was full of fire. She looked like a racehorse, though not an English one. The two other substrains, Mshétib and El Furrd, are not so much esteemed as the Enzekhi.

Besides these five great breeds, which are called the Khámsa, there are sixteen other breeds, all more or less esteemed, and most of them with one or more strains of blood, accounted equal to the Khámsa. These are :—

1. MÁNEGHI, *fem. Maneghieh* (the long necked).

Said by some (but without sufficient authority) to be an offshoot of the Kehîlan Ajúz. The characteristics of this breed are marked. They are plain and without distinction, have coarse heads, long ewe necks, powerful shoulders, much length and strong but coarse hind quarters. They have also much bone, and are held in high repute for the qualities of endurance and staying power. Niebuhr's description of the Kochlanis seems to have been written expressly for them. Of the two substrains the most esteemed is the Máneghi Hédruj, of which the family of Ibn Sbéyel of the Gomussa possesses the finest mares. These are generally known as Máneghi Ibn Sbéyel, but there is no distinct strain of that name. The other substrain, *Máneghi es Slâji* (greyhound), is described as being "the original" Maneghi breed.

2. SÁADAN, *fem. Sáadeh.*

The substrain, *Sáadan Toyán*, is in high repute. The handsomest and strongest mare we have is of this breed. She is a chestnut fourteen hands two inches, of perfect beauty and immense power, but she cannot gallop with the Kehîlans. She bears a strong resemblance to one of the portraits of Eclipse,

that published in the "Book of the Horse." She was bred by the Towf Ánazeh, who never come north of the Hamád. She was known far and wide among the Ánazeh tribes as "*the* Saadeh."

3. DÁKHMAN, *fem. Dákhmeh.*

The substrain *Em Amr.* We saw a very beautiful Dákhmeh filly at the Gomussa. All the horses of this breed we saw or heard of were dark bay or brown.

4. SHUÉYMAN, *fem. Shuéymèh.*

Of this the only substrain is the *Shuéyman Shah.* Faris, Sheykh of the Northern Shammar, has a mare of this breed. She is coarse, but of immense strength and courage, and when moving becomes handsome. She is a dark bay of fourteen hands three inches, or thereabouts.

5. JILFAN, *fem. Jilfeh.*

Substrain *Jilfan Stam el Bulád* (sinews of steel). A——, son of Mijuel of the Misrab, rode a fine bay three-year old colt, a *Jilfan Stam el Bulad.*

6. TÒËSSAN, *fem. Tóesseh.*

Substrain *Tóëssan Alyami.* The only horse we saw of this breed was a bay, handsome but very small.

7. SÁMHAN, *fem. Samheh.*

Substrain *Samhan el Goméaa.* The tallest and strongest colt we saw among the Gomussa was of this breed. He has already been described in the journal.

8. WÁDNAN, *fem. Wadneh.*

Substrain *Wádnan Hursán.*

9. RÍSHAN, *fem. Risheh.*

Substrain *Rishan Sherábi.*

10. KEBÉYSHAN, *fem. Kebéysheh.*
Substrain *Kebeyshan el Omeyr.*
11. MELÉKHAN, *fem. Melékha.*
12. JERÉYBAN, *fem. Jeréybeh.*
13. JEYTÁNI, *fem. Jeylanûeh.*
14. FERÉJAN, *fem. Ferejéh.*
15. TRÉYFI, *fem. Treyfieh.*
16. RÁBDAN, *fem. Rábdeh.*

It will be observed that in the foregoing list, all the breeds, except the last six, have at least one substrain, whose name is added to that of the breed, and these substrains only are used in choosing sires. A Kehîlan without an affix to his name is not *hadûd*, that is, not "worthy;" and of the disqualified class mares only are used for breeding—their produce, however, inherit their disabilities, and the Arabs do not consider that a stain in the blood can be extinguished by lapse of time. On the other hand a Ríshan, with the affix of Sherábi, or a Sámhan, with that of El Gomeáa, are perfectly qualified, although a Kehîlan Ajúz or a Segláwi Jedrán would be preferred. Of the minor breeds none are kept absolutely pure, except the Máneghi Hédruj of Ibn Sbéyel. In all cases, the breed of the colt is that of his dam, not of his sire.

There is no such distinction in the desert as that made in India, of high caste and low caste, first class and second class. An animal, about whose breeding there is any doubt, is disqualified altogether, and is not bred from.

I add a table, showing the whole of the strains and substrains, premising that one and all of them are reputed to have descended from the same original stock.

POSTSCRIPT.

Scheme of a Euphrates Valley Railway.—Of river communication.—The Turkish system of government.—Its partial success.—Its failings.—A guess at the future.

It has been suggested to me that I ought to say a few words as to the possible future of the countries described in this book, more especially in relation to their supposed destiny of giving us an overland route to India;—and first as to the scheme of a railway between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

In these days of engineering triumphs, all things are of course possible, and a railway could doubtless be constructed over any part of the desert. To lay eyes, however, certain difficulties present themselves, if not in the construction, at least in the working of such a road, while the prospect of its ever proving a financial success, looks like the most chimerical of fancies. A railway following the line of the Euphrates, must pass either along the actual Valley, or the table-land above it. In the first case the flooding of the river and its frequent changes of bed will have to be considered, while in the second an immense amount of cutting and bridging will be required, for the whole of the desert immediately bordering the valley is a network of wadys

and ravines. The plain, too, lies at an average height of some hundred feet above the river, and is possessed of no water at its own level. Lastly, several intricate lines of hills must be cut through. The latter remarks apply with double force to any more direct route across the desert. In winter, indeed, there is a line of fresh-water pools, running between Damascus and Ana, but these are dependent for their existence entirely on the autumn rains, and the rain does not always fall. In summer they are dry.

A much more serious objection to a desert railway, would be the impossibility of making practical use of it, except in the temperate months. I cannot think that many passengers would choose a railway journey of a thousand miles under such a sun as the Hamád boasts, between May and October. The average maximum daily temperature in the coolest house in Bagdad during June and July is 107°, while the thermometer there sometimes goes up to 120°, and even 122°. The heat of the desert would be far greater; and, unless stations of refuge were established, in which to pass the heat of the day, summer travelling would be impossible for Europeans. These and the road would have to be well guarded, as it is unlikely the Ánazeh would respect them.

As a commercial scheme it must be considered, that though *through* traffic for goods might be abundant, and *through* passenger traffic in the

winter months, no *local* traffic could be counted on. The villagers of the Euphrates are too poor to afford the lowest price at which railway fares could be offered, while their existing caravan trade with camels is cheap, and time is of no value. The population of the river is extremely scanty. If there are fifty thousand inhabitants between Bagdad and Aleppo, it is more than I should suppose exists, and of these, four-fifths at least must belong to the lower villages south of Ana. Between Ana and Aleppo, three hundred miles, there is but one village of any importance, and probably not ten thousand inhabitants, all counted.

A more possible railway route, commercially speaking, lies along the track of the old caravan road by Orfa and Mosul, for this passes through a cultivated district, and would serve a series of large towns. I cannot, however, conceive that even this could be a financial success. For many years to come the existence of a railway would be powerless to repeople Assyria; and, with such large tracts of excellent soil lying uncultivated and close at hand between Aleppo and the sea, immigrants would hardly choose the tamarisk jungles of the Euphrates and Tigris as the scene of a new colony. It must be recollected that the area of alluvial land in either valley is very small. A principal feature of all these schemes seems to be the restoration of fertility to the Babylonian plain south of Bagdad. This, rich as the plain formerly was, could not now be effected with-

out a prodigious outlay in the form of waterworks. To reconstruct entirely the Babylonian system of canals is financially impossible, even for the richest country in the world at the present day; and without irrigation not a blade can grow.

The only practical scheme for improving the communications between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf is, in my opinion, the establishment of a line of steamers on the Euphrates. This, if properly managed, might do effectual good, and even be made to pay its expenses. The river is navigable for boats drawing eighteen inches of water nearly all the year round; and Midhat's boats failed only because they were too large. A line of steamers would sufficiently supply the wants of local traffic, and could afford to do so at a far cheaper rate than any railroad. Steam navigation would be free of danger from Bedouin interference; and the tamarisk scrub would long afford an excellent supply of fuel. Such a scheme, however, would be of little use to India.

Water communication established, and Turkish abuses reformed, the present system of government might well be left to work out the natural development of the country, though this could not be rapid. I have no sympathy with the Turks in Arabia, and still less with their administration. It is utterly corrupt; but I do not think their theory of government there is a bad one. The protection of the peaceable tribes and the repression of the war-

like ones; encouragement to all who will cultivate the soil: security for the high roads and military occupation of the villages; alliances entered into with the Bedouin chiefs, and inducements offered them to act as the police of the desert;—nothing, in idea, could be better or more European. It is only in practice that the Turks fail, and that, I fear, from incurable causes. Yet have they not wholly failed. From a military point of view, the Pashas can boast with some truth that, compared with twenty years ago, no country has made more rapid steps towards civilisation. The power of the Bedouin tribes has within that period been seriously checked, if not broken; and it is quite conceivable that in another twenty years, at the same rate of progress, the Ánazeh will have disappeared from the upper Syrian desert, and the Shammar have been reclaimed to settled life in Mesopotamia. On the day when the alluvial valley of the Euphrates shall be completely cultivated, and their access to the river cut off in summer, the true Bedouins must retire to the Nejd, whence they came, or abandon their independent life. Turkish optimists are excusable if they count on this. But for my part, I do not believe in the regeneration of Turkey, or even in the maintenance of its military power for any length of time.

The chief vice of the Turkish system, as now seen in the desert, is one which affects the whole empire,—ruthless taxation. The goose with the

golden eggs is every day being killed in Turkey, or at any rate mercilessly robbed, and to its last *nest egg*. In this way, the peaceful shepherd tribes, though protected from the Ánazeh and Shammar, are plundered by the Government, and hardly appreciate the change of masters. The Weldi, a rich tribe twenty years ago when they were tributary to the Ánazeh, are now reduced to poverty by the exactions of the Pashalik of Aleppo; and the Jibúri, on the Tigris, industrious herdsmen, seem strangely altered in circumstances since Layard lived among them in 1845. The only really prosperous nomades, at present under Turkish rule, are the Haddadin; and they, from their connection with the townsmen, may possibly have been respected in the general plunder. It is hardly to be wondered at then that, in view of that which has befallen their poorer neighbours, the great camel-owning tribes, who being always on the move, are out of Government reach, should have hitherto refused all proposals made them of abandoning their wild life.

Their power of offence, indeed, has been much restricted of late years by the garrisoning of the lines of river, and the introduction of "arms of precision" among the Turkish soldiery; and their old source of wealth, the tribute paid them by the desert towns, has been cut off. But, beyond this, nothing has been effected. The Ánazeh and Shammar are still as thoroughly independent of the Sultan as the day they first appeared within his

borders, while their ancient character and way of life remains unchanged. In my mind's eye I see a day not very far distant when, the treasury at Constantinople being exhausted, these outlying military posts of the Euphrates, with its schemes of railroads and steamers, will be abandoned, and the Bedouins, having exchanged their lances for more modern weapons, shall reign again supreme in the valley. The shepherd tribes, and even the villagers, will not much regret their return; and all will be as it was a hundred years ago. My sympathy is with them and not with progress; and in their interest I cry, "Long live the Sultan."

But will no other power appear in the desert?

THE END.

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